

FBI on John Birch Society...rev. February 4, 2021

NOTE #1: A new PDF which combines all 18 chapters of my JBS Report (614 pages) is now available at the link below. This new edition includes revisions to several chapters:

<https://archive.org/details/john-birch-society-report-october-2020-614pp/mode/2up>

NOTE #2: A new PDF which combines everything I have written re: the JBS attack upon our civil rights movement (249 pages) is now available at the link below. It is based, primarily, upon documents in FBI investigative files.

<https://archive.org/details/john-birch-society-vs-civil-rights-movement-249pp/mode/2up>

This page contains Chapters 1 thru 4

<i>INTRODUCTION – then</i>
<i>Chapter 1 = FBI Evaluations of Robert Welch and the John Birch Society</i>
<i>Chapter 2 = FBI vs. JBS on Internal Security Status of United States</i>
<i>Chapter 3 = FBI vs. JBS on Communist Infiltration of Clergy and Religious Institutions</i>
<i>Chapter 4 = FBI vs. JBS on Communists Within the Department of Health, Education, Welfare</i>

NOTE

My collection of FBI files pertaining to the Birch Society and related subject matters are now on my two Internet Archive webpages (see links below). More files will be added in the future. As of October 2020, over two million people have accessed my collection of FBI files.

INTERNET ARCHIVE FBI FILES COLLECTION

[https://archive.org/details/lazarfoia?and\[\]=mediatype%3A%22collection%22](https://archive.org/details/lazarfoia?and[]=mediatype%3A%22collection%22) AND

<https://archive.org/details/@ernie1241>

MY RESEARCH HOMEPAGE

<https://sites.google.com/site/ernie124102/home>

This Report explains why senior FBI officials (including FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover) came to the conclusion in FBI memos that the Birch Society was "extremist", "irrational", "irresponsible", and composed of "fanatics", and a "lunatic fringe."

My Report about former FBI Special Agent W. Cleon Skousen (link below) presents additional data concerning:

- the so-called "***mother article***" which appeared in a February 1961 issue of the west coast Communist newspaper, *People's World* -- which is the article that the Birch Society claims was subsequently used as the basis of mainstream media criticisms about the JBS. This Report illustrates how the JBS distorts reality, by selective use of evidence and suppression of inconvenient data, to arrive at false conclusions.

My Report entitled "***The Purpose of a Political Spectrum***" (link below) presents an analysis of the proposal by the Birch Society that our traditional understanding regarding nazism and fascism should be changed to reflect that those ideologies as well as white nationalists belong on the LEFT side of a political spectrum.

RELATED REPORTS:

EDGAR BUNDY (Church League of America) http://ernie1241.googlepages.com/bundy-1
ANATOLI GOLITSYN http://ernie1241.googlepages.com/golitsyn
HIGHLANDER FOLK SCHOOL -and the " <i>Communist Training School</i> " Controversy http://ernie1241.googlepages.com/hfs-1
DAN SMOOT (former FBI Special Agent / JBS endorser) http://ernie1241.googlepages.com/smoot
W. CLEON SKOUSEN (former FBI Special Agent / JBS endorser) This report includes an analysis of Skousen's 1963 pamphlet entitled " <i>The Communist Attack on The John Birch Society</i> " -- which, once again, reveals how selection of evidence by political extremists can be used to distort reality. http://ernie1241.googlepages.com/skousen
PURPOSE OF A POLITICAL SPECTRUM https://sites.google.com/site/ernie124102/home/politicalspectrum

NOTE:

Bibliographic citations appear in [brackets] below. "HQ" refers to the FBI "headquarters" file and serial number. "SAC" refers to the Special-Agent-in-Charge of FBI field offices.

INTRODUCTION:

The FBI headquarters main file on the John Birch Society is 62-104401 and it consists of about 12,000 pages in 60 sections. There are also additional sections consisting of public source material (primarily newspaper and magazine articles) which totals about 3000 pages.

However, this can be somewhat misleading in terms of the scope of Bureau interest in the Birch Society because numerous separate main files exist on persons, publications, front groups, and controversies connected to the Birch Society. In addition, there are often "*cross-references*" contained in other files which pertain to JBS-related subject matters.

In addition, almost every FBI field office opened a main file on the Birch Society and those field office files often were hundreds or thousands of pages. Of particular interest are the Boston, Chicago, and Los Angeles field office files which, combined, contain approximately 4800 pages. While a field office would normally send its summary memos or reports to headquarters, there often was considerable data not sent to headquarters---which is why the field office files should be reviewed.

EARLIEST DOCUMENTS

The earliest documents in the JBS main file are dated September 1957 (more than a year before the Birch Society was founded in December 1958). The documents discuss Robert Welch's self-published magazine then entitled *One Man's Opinion* [OMO]. In February 1958 its name was changed to *American Opinion* [AO]. The latter became the official organ of the Birch Society.

Senior Bureau officials were aware of Mr. Welch's writings because copies of his magazines (both OMO and AO) were sent to the Bureau by Welch. Those copies were often routed to senior FBI staff for review.

Later, as the Bureau became familiar with the Birch Society, it subscribed to *American Opinion* magazine under an alias. [See HQ 62-104401, #2, which is a 1/17/58 note concerning the routing of the February 1958 issue of *American Opinion* to Associate Director Clyde Tolson, and several officials within the Bureau's Domestic Intelligence Division.]

In April 1958, J. Edgar Hoover sent a thank-you note to Edwin McDowell at *American Opinion* expressing "[appreciation for your generous comments](#)" in a review article about Hoover's book, *Masters of Deceit*, which was published in the May 1958 issue of *American Opinion*. [HQ 62-104401, #3; 4/24/58 Hoover letter to McDowell.]

AMERICAN OPINION SCOREBOARD IGNITES FBI CONCERN:

In October 1958 the Legal Attaché at our embassy in Bonn, Germany received an inquiry from Col. Charles Mudgett Jr., Chief Counterintelligence Branch, G-2 Army Intelligence, that attached excerpts from the first annual *American Opinion* "Scoreboard" issue (July/August 1958). Our Legal Attaché asked FBI HQ to provide "[information appropriate for reply to G-2](#)"

The *Scoreboard* issue was compiled annually to estimate the degree of "[Communist influence and control](#)" in 105 countries around the world. The first *Scoreboard* estimated that the United States was 20-40% under "[Communist influence and control](#)". Several of our NATO allies were reported to be 40-60% under "[Communist influence and control](#)."

A footnote to the section pertaining to the United States declared that there was “Communist domination of the unions which control many strategic parts of our economy and our defense.”

Even more ominously, the *Scoreboard* analysis claimed that “75 vital links in the most secret communications of our government including those of the Pentagon to Air Force bases in New York, Maine, England, Canada, and Newfoundland” were all available to one Communist-dominated union, the American Communications Association.

Furthermore, the *Scoreboard* article claimed that no one in the Pentagon or Congress or the Executive Branch “even dares to try” to close down “this door of betrayal” because “That is one indication of how powerful the Communist influence has now become in almost all of our federal agencies.”

These inflammatory and alarmist accusations were among the first to trigger Bureau interest in Robert Welch and his activities.

First, the *Scoreboard* issue of AO, then an FBI Milwaukee field office report about a “secretive” group which Robert Welch was forming which appeared to encroach upon Bureau responsibilities, then revelations from Welch’s *Politician* manuscript, then a deluge of public inquiries and complaints --- all of this combined to produce an acute sensitivity within the Bureau about the type of anti-communism which the Birch Society was practicing.

The Bureau would soon discover that Welch and the JBS were severely undermining public confidence and trust in our top political leadership as well as the security agencies of our country.

THE FBI LEARNS ABOUT THE BIRCH SOCIETY

In late January 1959 (six weeks after the founding meeting of the JBS in Indianapolis), the Special Agent in Charge of the FBI’s Milwaukee field office sent a memo to Hoover which summarized a report from a Milwaukee office confidential source who was identified as a former FBI Special Agent who was an employee at a public relations firm and he had attended a JBS recruitment meeting where Mr. Welch spoke.

“According to Shinnars [James R. Shinnars, former FBI Special Agent who attended and reported on meeting to FBI Milwaukee] the meeting was conducted by Welch in a very secretive manner. Those in attendance were instructed not to divulge what had transpired to their office personnel or even to their wives at this juncture.” Shinnars “emphasized that the great majority of those in attendance...were exceedingly prominent and influential individuals in the Milwaukee area, whose loyalties toward the U.S. are unquestioned.” [HQ 62-104401, #6; 1/20/59 SAC Milwaukee to J. Edgar Hoover.]

MEMORANDUM • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI

FROM: SAC, BIRMINGHAM (100-40)

SUBJECT: ROBERT W. WELCH
ANTI-COMMUNIST FRONT
BIRMINGHAM DIVISION

On 1/19/59 Mr. JOHN H. SHINNERS, former SA, and presently member of public relations firm of WELCH, SHINNERS, BISH and SHANNON, 743 U. S. Highway 90, Birmingham, Ala., furnished the following information. SHINNERS requested that his name be kept confidential at this time.

On Friday and Saturday, 1/18/59 and 1/19/59, at the Shinners County Club a meeting was held attended exclusively by 15 or 16 leading industrialists in the Birmingham area, the majority of whom are men of means and position. Apparently the individual most instrumental in getting the group together was Mr. WILLIAM C. GIBBS, Gibbs Foundries, Birmingham, Ala., who is an unusually potent force among industrialists in the area. The group also included Mr. SAUL DUBOIS of Giles-Dubois Co., Birmingham, who is also an exceedingly potent force in Birmingham. Also attending was a Mr. HERBERT WHITE, who is associated with the National Association of Manufacturers and who is also from Birmingham.

At this meeting ROBERT W. WELCH was the sole lecturer. He conducted his lecture from prepared notes. The meetings were all business and had no recreation or family whatsoever. WELCH included his discussion and his lecture was the keynote and very great stress was put on anti-Communist action in the U. S. Apparently WELCH is conducting a drive throughout the country to obtain leads to or eliminate the anti-Communist activity. Generally speaking, WELCH's purpose is to establish ostensible Communist front groups in localities throughout the country which in reality will be anti-Communist groups. He claims that for his lecture a great amount of money is needed and it is under this claim. According to WELCH, his presentation will be held over the last part of the U. S., and particularly in the West Coast. He claims that there they claim to be all. Apparently WELCH WHITE heard WELCH conduct a similar meeting in Birmingham, Ala., and at that time urged him to come to Birmingham to conduct the meetings that were held on 1/18-19/59.

WELCH
- copies
- Birmingham (100-40)
- Mr. GIBBS
- Mr. DUBOIS
- Mr. WHITE
- Mr. SHINNERS
- Mr. SHANNON
- Mr. BISH
- Mr. WELCH
- Mr. GIBBS
- Mr. DUBOIS
- Mr. WHITE
- Mr. SHINNERS
- Mr. SHANNON
- Mr. BISH
- Mr. WELCH

MEMORANDUM • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI

FROM: SAC, BIRMINGHAM (100-40)

SUBJECT: ROBERT W. WELCH
ANTI-COMMUNIST FRONT
BIRMINGHAM DIVISION

According to WELCH, the money for the drive is to be raised by the sale of the book "The Great Threat" and will be raised directly in the U. S. and abroad. WELCH is also planning to raise money in England, Italy, and elsewhere.

It is claimed that WELCH is planning to raise money in the United States by the sale of the book "The Great Threat" and will be raised directly in the U. S. and abroad. WELCH is also planning to raise money in England, Italy, and elsewhere.

According to SHINNERS, the meeting was conducted by WELCH in a very businesslike manner. There is no doubt that WELCH is a very potent force in the Birmingham area and is a very potent force in the Birmingham area.

According to the background of WELCH, he claims to have a number of contacts in the Birmingham area and is a very potent force in the Birmingham area. He claims to have a number of contacts in the Birmingham area and is a very potent force in the Birmingham area.

SHINNERS advised that information has come to his attention that some of the men in attendance were skeptical of the validity of WELCH's lecture and that there were several people in attendance who were skeptical of WELCH's lecture and that there were several people in attendance who were skeptical of WELCH's lecture.

MEMORANDUM • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI

FROM: SAC, BIRMINGHAM (100-40)

SUBJECT: ROBERT W. WELCH
ANTI-COMMUNIST FRONT
BIRMINGHAM DIVISION

A check of Birmingham Bureau files to disclose any information identifiable with SUBJECT, R. W. WELCH, as with the publication "American Espionage."

The foregoing is being so the attention of the Bureau for information purposes. Research up to is not recommended until the initial efforts of WELCH in the Birmingham area might be followed up. It would be appropriate if the Birmingham Division could be furnished any available background on the matter.

Shinners reported that **“Welch lectured on communism and his thesis was the extreme and very urgent need for anti-communist action in the United States...Generally stated, Welch’s purpose is to establish ostensible Communist front groups in localities throughout the country which in reality will be anti-Communist groups...”** [Ibid]

It is unclear if Mr. Shinners understood Welch correctly with respect to creating **“ostensible Communist front groups”**. However, this was interpreted by the Bureau as potentially interfering with its functions and it triggered Bureau interest in the background of Welch and his plans for future activities. Furthermore, the Bureau had discovered that Robert Welch subscribed to the Communist newspaper, *Daily Worker*, which further piqued their interest. [HQ 62-104401, #7; 2/4/59 SAC Boston to J. Edgar Hoover.]

100-2-5494

(c) FRANCIS H. WELSH, JR. - INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 10-13-01 BY 60322 UCBAW/STP

RE: 100-2-5494, which has written a manuscript entitled "The Politician," which is a vicious attack on the political life and life of President Eisenhower. Which has not published the manuscript but has had a limited number of copies printed which he has distributed or "loaned" to friends or individuals who he believed would be interested in the contents. The Bureau is in possession of a copy of it. Therefore, if the manuscript is offered to you for reproduction purposes, it will not be necessary to send copies to the Bureau.

Welsh also created an organization in Indianapolis, Indiana, in December, 1950, called "The John Birch Society," the long-range objectives of which have been "elimination of Communism, more responsibility, and a better world." Chapters or units of this society are existing throughout various parts of the country. The Bureau has received several inquiries concerning the Society and it is in possession of a copy of "The Blue Book," which sets forth information on the Society.

The above is furnished for information purposes. In the event a chapter of the John Birch Society is organized in your territory, the Bureau should be notified promptly and furnished a resume of the chapter's activities. The Bureau is particularly interested in any efforts by subversive elements to take over or use the Society as its chapters. No investigation should be conducted.

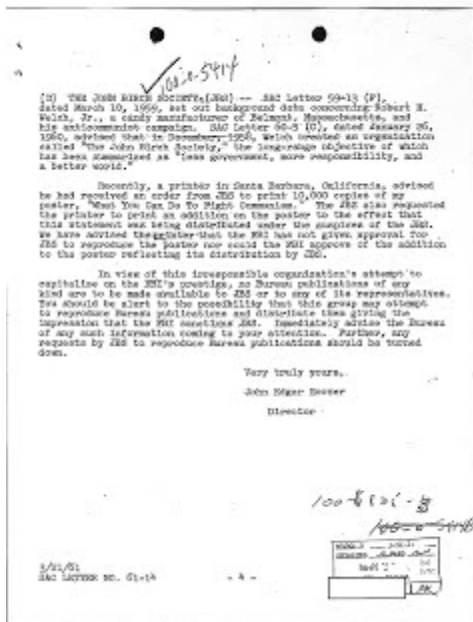
Very truly yours,
John Edgar Hoover
Director

1/26/50
SAC LETTER NO. 60-5

- 3 -

RE
67

100-2-5494-25
700-2-5494-25
SEARCHED INDEXED
SERIALIZED FILED
MAR 1 1950
FBI - NEW YORK



THE BUREAU LEARNS ABOUT “THE POLITICIAN” by Robert Welch

NOTE: Also see chapter (link below) regarding falsehoods by JBS about *The Politician*:

<https://sites.google.com/site/ernie124102/home/tp>

In late December 1958, the FBI Boston field office received a communication from G-2 Army Intelligence in New York City which attached excerpts from Robert's Welch's unpublished “private letter” entitled *The Politician* [hereafter TP] which was Welch's analysis of President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Although described as “a letter”, it was 287 pages.

G-2 advised Boston that a copy of Welch's manuscript was mailed to a U.S. Army serviceperson [Master Specialist Helen G. Morrissey] by Welch on August 31, 1958. Morrissey then asked Welch to send a copy of TP to Thomas Farrell in Brooklyn, New York (which he did) and G-2 obtained its copy from Farrell.

In a cover letter captioned “Dear Reader” accompanying TP, Welch described his “private letter” as being “on loan to you, for your eyes only, until it is returned.” Welch states that the persons receiving a copy of TP “have been very carefully selected—for reasons which will become obvious” and “I hope you will consider the contents as strictly confidential.”

Army Intelligence, 108th CIC Group in New York, described this unpublished version of TP in a January 1959 memo, as follows:

“*The Politician* is an attack on President Eisenhower and an allegation, in considerable detail that he has consistently aided the cause of Russia and International Communism...Chapter Nine of *The Politician* is particularly violent in its denunciation of President Eisenhower.”

“As an evaluation of the motives of Robert H.W. Welch Jr., in writing *The Politician*, and distributing it, it is felt that he is a Republican of the extreme right wing of the Party who has become progressively more and more disillusioned by the post-World War II soft attitude of the

United States toward International Communism and who had been frustrated by the preponderance of Modern Republicans in the present Administration. His feeling that President Eisenhower has deviated to the Left has now apparently grown to the point where he accuses the President of actively furthering Communism and its aims."

"An attack such as this one on the Chief Executive of the United States of America can only favor those elements of society who oppose the democratic processes by which we elect Presidents, and as such, aids the cause of International Communism which the author claims to abhor. The author must be considered to have become unbalanced on his subject or to be consciously aiding the enemies of the Republic. In view of his previous writings and background, it must be concluded that his hate for Communism has obscured his judgment and that he has written an unbalanced book." [HQ 62-104401, #8 which is 01/14/59 G-2 report on TP attached to 2/11/59 letter by Lt. Col. Ned Glenn, Acting Chief, Security Division, Army Intelligence]

In early 1959, the FBI Boston field office obtained the entire copy of TP from Army Intelligence and they forwarded it to FBI HQ. After reviewing its content, Hoover sent memos to the Attorney General, plus Gordon Gray who was Special Assistant to the President, as well as other government officials.

Hoover's memo stated that:

"This book attacks the reputation of the President of the United States, particularly chapter nine, which is a violent attack on President Eisenhower." [HQ 62-104401, #10; 3/6/59 Hoover memo.]

Robert Welch (and his friends) were acutely aware of the damage that his comments about Eisenhower would have if they became publicly known. For example, in a letter to J.W. Clise of Seattle, Welch wrote:

"Our rather extreme precautions with regard to this document are not due to any worry on my part as to what might happen to myself...But many of my best informed friends feel that having the manuscript get into the wrong hands at the present time might do far more damage than good to the whole anti-Communist cause; whereas, by distributing it very carefully and quietly to quite a limited number of strongly patriotic leaders, so that the information in this document becomes a background to their own thinking on which their own actions are determined it can do considerable good." [2/25/59 letter to J.W. Clise, Seattle WA].

After reading TP, Barry Goldwater telephoned Welch and told him **"I want no part in this. I won't even have it around. If you were smart, you'd burn every copy you have."** (Robert Alan Goldberg, *Barry Goldwater*, Yale University Press, 1995, p. 137)

The passages from the unpublished edition of TP which caused Welch the most grief (and which were quoted the most frequently when its existence became public knowledge in the Summer of 1960) were:

Page 266: "For the sake of honesty, however, I want to confess here my own conviction that Eisenhower's motivation is more ideological than opportunistic. Or, to put it bluntly, I personally think that he has been sympathetic to ultimate Communist aims, realistically willing to use Communist means to help them achieve their goals, knowingly accepting and abiding by Communist orders, and consciously serving the Communist conspiracy, for all of his adult life."

Page 267: "And it seems to me that the explanation of sheer political opportunism, to account for Eisenhower's Communist-aiding career, stems merely from a deep-rooted aversion of any American to recognizing the horrible truth. Most of the doubters, who go all the way with me

except to the final logical conclusion, appear to have no trouble whatever in suspecting that Milton Eisenhower is an outright Communist. Yet they draw back from attaching the same suspicion to his brother, for no other real reason than that one is a professor and the other a president. While I too think that Milton Eisenhower is a Communist, and has been for thirty years, this opinion is based largely on general circumstances of his conduct. But my firm belief that Dwight Eisenhower is a dedicated, conscious agent of the Communist conspiracy is based on an accumulation of detailed evidence so extensive and so palpable that it seems to me to put this conviction beyond any reasonable doubt."

Page 268: "The Communists can now use all the power and prestige of the presidency of the United States to implement their plans, just as fully and even openly as they dare. They have arrived at this point by three stages. In the first stage, Roosevelt thought he was using the Communists, to promote his personal ambitions and grandiose schemes. Of course, instead, the Communists were using him; but without his knowledge or understanding of his place in their game. In the second stage, Truman was used by the Communists, with his knowledge and acquiescence, as the price he consciously paid for their making him president. In the third stage, in my own firm opinion, the Communists have one of their own actually in the presidency. For this third man, Eisenhower, there is only one possible word to describe his purposes and his actions. That word is treason."

Scanned copies of these pages from the unpublished August 1958 edition of TP, may be seen here:



In the 1963 published edition of TP, Welch is somewhat more guarded and theoretical in his wording, but he still manages to defame Eisenhower and plainly insinuate that Eisenhower was a traitor. The chapter title in which even the toned-down comments are made is: *The Word Is Treason*.

In the 1963 published edition which excises the comments on pages 266-268 just quoted above, there is a footnote on page 278 (footnote 2) and its text appears on pages cxxxviii-cxxxix at the back of the book. That text is as follows:

"At this point in the original manuscript there was one paragraph in which I expressed my own personal belief as to the most likely explanation of the events and actions with this document had tried to bring into focus. In a confidential letter, neither published nor offered for sale, and restricted to friends who were expected to respect the confidence but offer me in exchange their own points of view, this seemed entirely permissible and proper. It does not seem so for an edition of the letter that is now to be published and given, probably, fairly wide distribution. So that paragraph, and two explanatory paragraphs, connected with it, have been omitted here. And the reader is left entirely free to draw his own conclusions."

Welch's explanation above for excising 3 paragraphs from the original unpublished version makes very little sense. The themes, arguments, evidence, premises, and conclusions contained in TP differ not one iota from themes, arguments, evidence, premises, and conclusions in official Birch Society literature from its inception.

Both attribute all of our nation's adversities and setbacks to conscious deliberate actions by numerous prominent Americans in Administrations since FDR [or even Wilson!] occupied the White House. Explanations of motivation always center around "*treason*" and "*conspiracy*" by numerous noxious, subversive, and unprincipled characters.

Consequently, the most reasonable inference for why Welch felt compelled to eliminate 3 paragraphs from the 1963 published edition of TP, is the same reason why Welch initially falsely claimed that his "private letter" had nothing to do with the JBS, namely, Welch thought excising the "offending" paragraphs would diminish negative publicity and retain those members (or prospective members) of the Birch Society who might be offended by such an unsparing denunciation and description of Eisenhower as an outright traitor and "*dedicated, conscious agent of the Communist conspiracy.*"

To repeat Welch's rationale from page 267 of the unpublished version, he was trying to accommodate those persons who could not "*go all the way with me...to the final logical conclusion.*"

By contrast, these comments by FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover:

"During his Presidency and afterwards at Gettysburg, I was close with Gen. Eisenhower. He was a great man and a great President." [01/72 interview with J. Edgar Hoover in *Nation's Business* magazine]

"My dear Mr. President: Many tributes and accolades are being paid you as you leave the highest office in the land, and although the FBI's voice in but one of millions, it nevertheless rings with sincerity and respect."

"Working under your brilliant leadership for two administrations has represented to us the fulfillment of many splendid opportunities to serve the best interests of our great country. Your keen insight and understanding of the crushing responsibilities faced by the Nation's criminal and subversive fighters have made our task easier."

"I personally am very grateful for your considerable interest in the FBI and its personnel. The staunchness of the FBI career service is only as strong as the enduring friendships we make throughout life. To borrow a phrase, to us you will never '*fade away*', but will always remain one of our brighter memories of service to God and country. With all good wishes...Sincerely, Edgar" [HQ 62-81742, #199 (1/18/61 J. Edgar Hoover letter to outgoing President Dwight D. Eisenhower)]

"I have received your letter dated September 25, 1963. Any rumors you have heard indicating the FBI has evidence that former President Dwight D. Eisenhower is a communist are completely false and too absurd to merit consideration." [HQ 62-81742, #263; 10/2/63 J. Edgar Hoover reply to inquiry about Eisenhower]

"Anybody who will allege that General Eisenhower was a Communist agent has something wrong with him. A lot of people read such allegations because I get some of the weirdest letters wanting to know

whether we have inquired to find out whether that is true. I have known General Eisenhower quite well myself and I have found him to be a sound, level-headed man." [J. Edgar Hoover testimony before Warren Commission, Volume 5, page 101]

After senior FBI officials reviewed a 2/20/59 summary memo that had been prepared by the Boston field office concerning Welch's background as well as the copy of TP which they had received from Army Intelligence plus the aforementioned Milwaukee field office report which seemed to suggest that Welch planned to create ostensible communist-front groups, Hoover approved dissemination of a SAC Letter to alert all 56 FBI field offices about Welch and the JBS:

"The personnel of your office should be made aware of Welch's activities and contemplated plans. You must be certain that your employees are alerted to promptly report to the Bureau any information concerning further activity by Welch in this regard. In the event information is received regarding any activity of Welch in the furtherance of setting his plan into operation, no investigation should be made but the Bureau should be promptly advised." [SAC Letter 59-13, 3/10/59]

By January 1960, several FBI field offices had reported to FBI HQ that they had obtained copies of TP. After receiving a radiogram from its Honolulu office, senior FBI officials commented:

"It appears Welch is beginning to give widespread distribution to *The Politician* and in view of the fact the John Birch Society is expanding its activities, it is believed we should furnish this data to the field in the form of a SAC Letter..." [HQ 62-104401, #40 and #41; 1/4/60 Honolulu FBI radiogram and 1/14/60 memo from F.J. Baumgardner to Alan Belmont, Domestic Intelligence Division.]

FBI HQ decided to notify all Special Agents in Charge of FBI field offices about the existence of *The Politician* manuscript:

"Welch has written a manuscript entitled '*The Politician*' which is a vicious attack on the political life and beliefs of President Eisenhower." The SAC Letter closes with the comment: **"The Bureau is particularly interested in any efforts by subversive elements to takeover or use this Society or its chapters."** [SAC Letter 60-5 dated 1/26/60]

THE POLITICIAN BECOMES PUBLIC

A series of articles by Chicago newspaperman, Jack Mabley, containing excerpts from TP, were published in Chicago's third largest circulation newspaper (*Chicago Daily News*) commencing July 25th 1960. Mabley's articles were published at the exact time that the GOP National Convention convened in Chicago to select their 1960 Presidential nominee. It was, to put it mildly, sensational news which ignited a firestorm within GOP circles. Mabley shared his copy of TP with other reporters and soon the content of TP was being revealed in newspapers all over the country.

See first two Mabley articles here:



In the Spring of 1961, Robert Welch publicly blamed "*the media*" for the controversy that re-erupted at that time over TP and he claimed that critics deliberately distorted what he wrote and they wrongly associated the Birch Society with the views expressed in his "*private letter*".

At that time, Mr. Welch claimed that his manuscript was circulated as nothing more than a numbered "*private letter*" which was "*on loan*" to interested, trustworthy individuals who would return it and keep it confidential.

Welch further claimed (falsely) that TP had no relationship to the John Birch Society since it was written long before the JBS was founded and it was unknown to almost all JBS members.

While it was true that TP was originally written before the JBS was founded and most JBS members were not aware of its existence, nevertheless, in the months immediately following the creation of the

Birch Society, TP was used as a recruitment tool for the Society and represented a "*higher truth*" which only certain "*advanced*" prospective members could be trusted to understand.

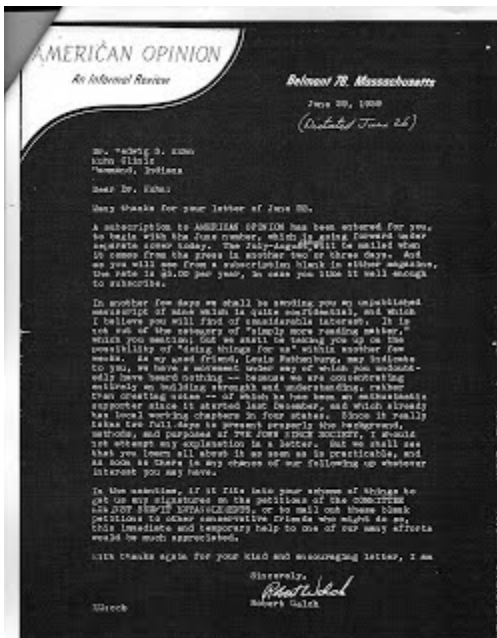
Robert Welch wrote letters in 1959-1960, to accompany copies of TP he mailed out, in which he solicited members for the Birch Society based upon their reading and acceptance of the themes, evidence, and arguments presented in TP.

For example, on August 27, 1959, the FBI's Chicago Field Office wrote a memo to J. Edgar Hoover pertaining to correspondence between Robert Welch and Dr. Hedwig S. Kuhn of Hammond, Indiana. Dr. Kuhn also provided nine enclosures which she received from Robert Welch.

Enclosure #4 is a 6/29/59 Welch letter on *American Opinion* letterhead in which Welch tells Dr. Kuhn that he will be sending her a copy of *The Politician* in a few days and Welch then solicits her support for the JBS and the JBS-front group, Committee Against Summit Entanglements (CASE). CASE was a Birch Society project to protest the visit of Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev to the U.S.

The references to "*we*" and "*us*" and "*a movement*" in Welch's letter (excerpt below) obviously refer to the Birch Society. Louis Ruthenberg, whom Welch mentions, refers to a founding member of the Birch Society from Indiana who also served on the JBS National Council from its inception.

"In another few days we shall be sending you an unpublished manuscript of mine which is quite confidential, and which I believe you will find of considerable interest. It is not out of the category of 'simply more reading matter' which you mention; but we shall be taking you up on the possibility of 'doing things for us' within another few weeks. As my good friend, Louis Ruthenberg, may indicate to you, we have a movement under way of which you undoubtedly have heard nothing--because we are concentrating entirely on building strength and understanding, rather than creating noise -- of which he has been an enthusiastic supporter since it started last December and which already has local working chapters in four states. Since it really takes two full days to present properly the background, methods, and purposes of the John Birch Society, I should not attempt any explanation in a letter. But we shall see that you learn all about it as soon as is practicable, and as soon as there is any chance of our following up whatever interest you may have."



On July 7th, Dr. Kuhn acknowledged receiving her copy of TP. Then Dr. Kuhn asked Mr. Welch if she could share her copy of TP with another individual.

On July 16th, Welch responded and authorized Dr. Kuhn to permit Mr. Dean Mitchell to read her copy of TP (or if she preferred, RW offered to mail a copy to Mr. Mitchell).

In enclosure #5, (7/16/59 Welch letter to Dr. Kuhn) Welch describes *The Politician* to Dr. Kuhn with these words:

“The manuscript will not really give you any information concerning the John Birch Society, concerning which Mr. Carto has written you for me, but will at least give both you and Mr. Mitchell a better understanding of how serious is the danger we face, and how far advanced the conspiracy threatening us, as we see it. And you will then find that The John Birch Society is a movement, started quietly by this writer with a small group of leading industrialists who met with me in Indianapolis last December, for the purpose of building strength and understanding to combat this conspiracy – while avoiding publicity to the fullest extent possible, because creating noise is no part of our intention.”

In other words: read and believe TP and then join the JBS to do something about it!

Welch also told Dr. Kuhn that there were no immediate plans to form Indiana chapters of the JBS for a few months but Dr. Kuhn could become a Home Chapter member of the JBS—i.e. receive all her JBS member materials from their headquarters office in Belmont, MA. [HQ 62-104401-17, 8/27/59 SAC Chicago memo to J. Edgar Hoover with enclosures #4, #5, and #6; the same material may also be seen in Chicago FBI file 100-36671, serial #2].

Another example which reflects how Welch used TP is revealed in correspondence between Welch and Alfred Kohlberg of New York City. Initially, Kohlberg received one of the typed carbon copies of TP (#1W) in the summer of 1958 (before the JBS was formed) but in an October 22, 1959 letter, Welch mentioned to Kohlberg that a newer **“slightly expanded and much better”** version was available **“which I carefully had run by offset from copy done on an electric typewriter right here in our office, about a year ago.”** [Welch's reference to **“our office”** refers to JBS HQ in Belmont, MA.]. This new edition sent to Kohlberg on October 26, 1959 was #C7 and, Welch observed that it contained **“an additional chapter entitled ‘A Postscript.’** The total pages increased from 278 (carbon copy edition) to 302 pages (offset edition). The new **“Postscript”** chapter was intended to encourage readers to consider joining the JBS after they read TP.

One of the arguments frequently made by JBS members is that **“nobody has found any errors”** in TP and, invariably, JBS members describe TP as a **“factual”** and **“well-documented”** expose of our postwar history.

It is pertinent therefore to refer readers to a letter from Welch to Alfred Kohlberg dated September 4, 1958 which responds to comments made by Kohlberg in a letter to Welch dated September 2, 1958. In that letter, Kohlberg brings Welch's attention to several factual errors in TP and Kohlberg concluded:

“As to the book itself, you do not prove your case except by implication, which is not good enough in so serious a matter. All your material added together could prove an entirely different case by implication, just as well as what you seem to make it prove.”

When Welch replied to Kohlberg on September 4th, he acknowledged that his manuscript **“which began as a letter, was written and intended for a specific purpose: Simply to tell a quite limited number of patriotic friends of mine what I personally believed about the present situation, why I believed it, and what I personally was trying to do about it...I did not really intend to try to prove anything, but to give my reasons for believing what I did, and my opinions for whatever they might worth. And I thoroughly agree with you that my approach to the public, which is through my speeches and the magazine, has to be entirely different.”**

By definition, “opinions” **(contrary to what Birchers usually assert re: TP)** refer to **“a view or judgment formed about something, not necessarily based on fact or knowledge.”**

It is also noteworthy to report that other friends of Welch (such as Elizabeth Churchill Brown) also sent him letters containing corrections to Welch's factual errors in TP --- but Welch never corrected any of those errors in the subsequent unpublished manuscript or in the published edition of TP in 1963.

By September 1959, senior Bureau officials were already commenting in their memos about Welch using TP as a recruitment tool for the JBS:

“From a review of the correspondence between (name deleted) and Welch, it appears that Welch may be using the John Birch Society in sending copies of *The Politician* to various individuals

recommended to him or who he believes would be interested in its contents." [HQ 62-104401, #23; 9/10/59 memo from Alan Belmont to F.J. Baumgardner – FBI Domestic Intelligence Division.]

In July 1960, the Special-Agent-in-Charge of the FBI's Chicago Field Office sent a memo to Hoover which reported that three JBS recruitment meetings were held in the Chicago area according to a local informant. Then, "[informant name deleted] **was given a copy of *The Politician* and told that the book is given out only when a member of the society is 'qualified'.**" [HQ 62-104401, #123; 7/7/60 SAC Chicago memo to J. Edgar Hoover]

In September 1960, a detailed report by the Chicago district office of the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) discussed the relationship between *The Politician* and the JBS in the Chicago area along with comments made by a JBS National Council member, Stillwell J. Conner (his name is mis-spelled as "*Stilwell J. Connor*" in the ONI report excerpt quoted below):

"One publication authored by Welch that does not receive wide distribution except to Coordinators and leaders within the Society is *The Politician*. *The Politician* is a 302-page, black paperbound book, reproduced by the photo-offset process, with looseleaf binders. A copy of *The Politician* was reviewed at DIO-9ND [District Intelligence Office, 9th Naval District] and the general tenor is critical of such national leaders as President Eisenhower, General George C. Marshall, Allen and John F. Dulles, and Presidents Truman and Roosevelt. In various passages he accuses President Eisenhower of being a conscious Communist agent reporting to his Communist superior Dr. Milton Eisenhower. Other government leaders are disposed of as either conscious Communists or as tools and dupes of the Communists. A good example of the literary style employed by Welch is illustrated by quoting from page 17 of his book "*I defy anybody who is not actually a Communist himself, to read all of the known facts about his career and not decide that since at least sometime in the 1930's George Catlett Marshall has been a conscious, deliberate, dedicated agent of the Soviet conspiracy.*" In the same manner President Eisenhower is attacked throughout the book" ...

"Stilwell J. Connor, 6657 N. Sioux Avenue, Chicago, Illinois and his wife have been particularly active Coordinators for the John Birch Society in the Chicago area and specifically at Glenview, Illinois. [Name deleted] of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Glenview has cooperated with Society Coordinators by calling special parish meetings for the purpose of organizing local chapters of the Society and extending the use of church buildings for holding such meetings. One such meeting held on July 11, 1960 attracted about 200 citizens to hear Connor present the views of Robert Welch via sound films and literature. One member of the audience asked about Welch's book, *The Politician*. Connor vehemently denied the existence of such a book whereupon the interested spectator produced the book and proceeded to read appropriate quotations for the benefit of Connor and his audience. Connor then admitted the existence of the book but reportedly said that the book was only for those who were properly guided within the Society. Connor reportedly remarked that to make the book available to the general membership without proper guidance would be analogous to permitting a first year medical student attempt to cure cancer. On another occasion a potential recruit of the Society was disillusioned after reading *The Politician* and expressed her disgust to Connor who cautioned her that if she ever revealed the nature of the book he would promptly discredit her and deny the existence of the book and its contents." [District Intelligence Office, Ninth Naval District – Chicago IL; 9/16/60 report captioned "***Ninth Naval District Subversive Trends of Current Interest, The John Birch Society***", pages 2-3]

The edition of the TP in the files of G-2 Army Intelligence that was obtained by the FBI was mailed by Welch in November 1958 and it has a typewritten postscript by Robert Welch on the last page (page 287) which reads as follows:

"Two years ago I gave up my business responsibilities, and am now devoting '*the whole of my life*' without any pay or the expectation of remuneration of any kind, to efforts to wake up my fellow citizens to the horror and the imminence of the Communist danger. If you would like to help me increase the reach and effectiveness of those efforts, there is a postscript to this manuscript which I shall be glad to send to any reader who requests it. RW"

What was "*the postscript*"? See next paragraph.

Revilo Oliver, one of the 11 persons invited by Welch to attend the founding meeting of the Birch Society in December 1958, (he also was an original member of the JBS National Council), wrote in his 1981

memoir that when he received his copy of Welch's "*private letter*" in October 1958, attached to it was **"a prospectus for the formation of a national society, then unnamed but later known as the John Birch Society, and for the promotion, as an instrument of that society, of the periodical, renamed *American Opinion*..."** [Revilo P. Oliver, *America's Decline: The Education of a Conservative*, Londinium Press, 1982, page 154]

Oliver reports that his edition of TP which he received October 1, 1958 was 304 pages. My copy (August 1958 edition) is 287 pages so it would appear that the "*prospectus*" regarding formation of what would become the Birch Society (and the use of *American Opinion* magazine as a JBS organ) may have been an additional 17 pages.

Moreover, with respect to the founding meeting of the Birch Society in Indianapolis in December 1958, Oliver contends:

"The fact was that *The Politician* had presumably been read, and had been at least tacitly approved by, every man present at the meeting in Indianapolis, and was so far from having been 'disavowed' by anyone (except, possibly, in private comments of which I had no knowledge) that I recommended then and later that no one who had not read and approved the document should be admitted to membership in the Birch Society." [Ibid, page 158]

According to Oliver's recollection, **"Members of the (JBS National) Council were requested, and members of the salaried staff were instructed"** to endorse "**falsehoods**" about TP after the controversy erupted in Spring of 1961. [Ibid, page 158]

In private, Robert Welch blamed the debacle over his "*private letter*" on someone whom he had recommended to JBS members as an ally and about whom most JBS members had a very favorable opinion, namely, Frederick C. Schwarz of Christian Anti-Communism Crusade.

According to Welch, Schwarz was responsible for providing a copy of TP to a Chicago newspaperman (Jack Mabley of the *Chicago Daily News*), via one of Schwarz's functionaries, and it was the subsequent unfavorable publicity resulting from Chicago and Milwaukee newspaper articles plus wire service reports that caused Welch so much grief.

Welch was furious with Schwarz for his role in releasing *The Politician*. In a blistering 9-page letter to Schwarz, Welch made it clear how deeply hurt he was by Schwarz's behavior.

At the beginning of his letter, Welch reports several instances where anti-Communists had bad-mouthed and **"knifed"** both Welch and the JBS in the past. But, Welch pointed out, that he and the JBS had **"given specific instructions to our men in the field...to praise and support Fred Schwarz's activities at every turn"** and **"I believe that this policy and these instructions have been universally observed."**

"During the last few months, however, we now know that you personally have repeatedly been making extremely derogatory remarks about myself and The John Birch Society, to various groups and audiences; and that you have been reading from my private manuscript, called *The Politician* to support your disparaging remarks. We know that you have privately said things about me and the Society, to important conservative leaders, which -- in some cases anyway -- has caused those leaders to discontinue strong support which was already being given us by their organizations."

"But most important of all it was one of your men in Chicago, a close associate of yours and a life member of your organization, who deliberately set off the publicity about *The Politician* which has caused such furore in several Midwestern papers and at some other points

in the country. This man had '*dropped in*' on the meetings of some of our chapters in Greater Chicago--even though doing so required a two-hour trip, both ways, to and from his home --- for the ostensible reason that he was going to join whatever chapter was the most convenient for himself...Then, after our films had been shown, and at the psychological time to do the most possible damage, this man got up and read at length from *The Politician*, exhibited the copy he had with him, and otherwise tosses as harmful a bombshell as he possibly could into the proceedings. Apparently, Jack Mabley, the *Chicago Daily News* columnist, was in that audience by previous arrangement. At any rate, there is little doubt that the copy of *The Politician* which your man displayed at that meeting was turned over to Mabley as the basis of the vicious part of his two articles -- and then sent by Mabley to Alexander Dobish of the *Milwaukee Journal* for the articles that followed..." [Welch letter dated 9/6/60, to Dr. Fred Schwarz, Christian Anti-Communism Crusade, pages 3-4, copy in my possession.]

Welch then spends considerable space discussing what could be reasons to explain what he considered Schwarz's betrayal. Welch reveals the degree to which the unfavorable publicity hurt him:

"Disagreement is one thing, outside of the Communist world itself, or in relation to the Communists, (but) vindictive destructiveness towards those with whom we disagree -- especially if they have the same ultimate purposes as ourselves -- is quite another." [Ibid, page 8]

See entire text of Welch letter to Schwarz in Chapter 9 of this Report i.e. "*Documentary History of the JBS*" here:

<https://sites.google.com/site/ernie1241a/>

Chapter 1

FBI EVALUATIONS OF ROBERT WELCH and THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY

In March and April 1961, news reports circulated among top Bureau officials concerning the growth and activities of the JBS around the country. In addition, Bureau officials wrote memos which discussed the increasing number of inquiries received by the Bureau from alarmed citizens, politicians, and newspaper reporters concerning Birch Society activities and publications.

Many letter-writers asked the Bureau to comment upon whether or not the conclusions disseminated by the Birch Society were accurate. Others simply asked if the Bureau considered the JBS to be a patriotic and legitimate anti-Communist organization.

See, for example the following incoming correspondence addressed to Hoover:

- inquiry about whether or not article in *American Opinion* magazine by J.B. Matthews was factual and asking Hoover if AO was a reliable publication. [HQ 62-104401, #9; 2/21/59]
- complaint that Birchers **"are very sincere in their efforts but resort to a great deal of fear talk in their discussions. It is hard for me to believe that so many of our wonderful leaders are 'pink'."** [HQ 62-104401, #14, 4/9/59 letter to Hoover].

- Inquiry from Hartford CT resident asking for background information about the JBS because concerned that it might be a **“subversive front group”** [HQ 62-104401, #16; 8/1/59 letter to Hoover.]
- Request for background on JBS: **“I am interested to know if this group is subversive or extremist in any way. The local leaders of this group have also headed several other ‘hate’ organizations which are, in my mind, definitely anti-American.”** [HQ 62-104401, #32; 12/29/59 letter to Hoover.]
- Complaint regarding type of material JBS disseminating. Letter writer tells Hoover she has read the JBS *Blue Book*, **“but it was filled with statements for which I could find no factual backing, hence I did not put much stock in it.”** Then writer reports that her daughter has been influenced by reading JBS literature and daughter believes newspapers don’t print “truth” because **“they are all ‘red’ and will not print the truth.”** **Writer compares JBS technique “to what Goebbels did...prior to the outbreak of World War II...Frankly, this whole matter smells to me of the possibility that the Commies are promoting this to discredit our leaders, including the President, that they deliberately are trying to instill fear in the hearts of Americans, that by 1965, the Commies are going to takeover, that it is inevitable, and try and stampede people into giving up.”** Writer then asks Hoover to help **“get my daughter straightened out so she will not lose her mind worrying about what is going to happen by 1965.”** [HQ 62-104401, #35, 12/28/59 letter to Hoover.]
- Inquiry from someone who read JBS reprint *“To A Good American”*: **“The letter sounds as if it may be from a Communist-front organization”.** [HQ 62-104401, #37; 1/3/60 letter to Hoover.]
- Writer concerned about **“the alarming condition of Communist control in this country”** and then asks if JBS can be recommended. [62-104401, #51; 2/3/60 letter to Hoover]
- Dentist letter asking Hoover if he endorsed the JBS since the JBS magazine **“has claimed strongly that fluoridation of municipal water supplies was promoted by and is a part of the communist conspiracy. Since I am a dentist and have supported fluoridation strongly, I find this almost inconceivable.”** [HQ 62-104401, #75; 4/4/60 letter to Hoover.]
- Houston informant who attended JBS meeting stated: **“Several in the group have become quite disturbed over the information put out by the Society and have become confused as to just what is the truth regarding the present Communist situation in the United States and just what action they should take...She advised that the [JBS] leaders point out that if President Eisenhower goes to the Summit Meeting, he will sell the U.S. out to the communists and the communists will takeover the U.S. in about three years and everyone in this country except the communists will be in slave labor camps.”** [HQ 62-104401, #94; 5/3/60, SAC Houston to Hoover.]

EARLY FBI MEMOS ON WELCH AND JBS

Two FBI memos in particular reveal the attitude of top Bureau officials concerning Welch and the JBS. In the first memo, Assistant Director C.D. DeLoach is informed about two letters that the Bureau received from persons expressing concern about charges made by JBS members in their communities.

“The Bureau has, of course, been cognizant over a period of time of the many fanatical right-wing anti-Communist organizations which are presently spreading widely throughout the country and of their utterly absurd viewpoints. For your information, I am attaching copies of letters dated March 6 and 8, 1961 from (names deleted for privacy) which typify the absolute confusion and lack of confidence in American institutions and one's fellow man being caused

by representatives of such organizations." [HQ 62-104401-789, March 15, 1961, D.C. Morrell to C.D. DeLoach].

The letters attached to the memo concern two Birch Society officials. (1) Retired U.S. Air Force Brig. General William L. Lee, the Birch Society Coordinator in Amarillo Texas, and (2) Fred Koch, a JBS National Council member from Wichita KS.

Both Koch and Lee had made what the FBI considered inflammatory comments about Communist infiltration of our society. Fred Koch had stated in speeches that U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers was in collusion with the Soviets, and had not been shot down but landed safely and was paid by the Soviet government.

General Lee was a prominent exponent of the notion that our nation's clergy and religious institutions had been extensively infiltrated by Communists and Communist sympathizers. He was particularly critical of the National Council of Churches of Christ. .

In the second memo, Chief Inspector W.C. Sullivan informs Alan H. Belmont (Assistant to the Director, in charge of the Bureau's Domestic Intelligence Division) about a *Time* magazine article entitled "*The Americanists*" which discussed the Birch Society.

Sullivan characterized the article as a "**succinct picture of a lunatic-fringe type of organization that is doing more harm than good with a professional anticommunist attack on everything and everyone opposing its own dictatorial policies.**"

Sullivan then compared JBS to the Communist Party USA, "**...both of which exist under the hard-boiled dictatorial direction of one man, both of which have cells in various cities throughout the country, and both of which operate effectively through front organizations in a militant manner that is barely a goose step away from the formation of goon squads.**"

Sullivan concluded his memo with the following observation about the JBS:

"The supporters of this organization and those influenced by the vicious propaganda it has been putting out are typical of the fanatics who have been attempting lately to disparage and discredit Bureau speakers who have been giving audiences a true, factual picture concerning the nature of the threat which communist activities in this country represent." [HQ 62-104401-791, March 9, 1961, W.C. Sullivan to A.H. Belmont].

The problem which Sullivan mentioned (attacks on FBI speakers) reached a peak in the Fall of 1961. J. Edgar Hoover approved Sullivan's proposal that he make several speeches around the country to address extreme right charges that our clergy and religious institutions (especially the Methodist Church) were significantly influenced or controlled by subversives.

In December 1961, J. Edgar Hoover met with Charles Bacon, the National Commander of the American Legion. During this meeting, Hoover expressed his concern over "**extremists of the right-wing and the harm such groups were doing to our fight against communism**" and he specifically referred to extreme right-wing attacks upon FBI speakers. Right-wing extremists disseminated false assertions regarding "**the extent of infiltration into the clergy.**" See Chapter 3 of this Report for discussion of this topic. Below is a copy of the memo which summarizes Hoover's concern over right-wing extremists.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Memorandum
 TO : Mr. Mohr
 FROM : C. D. DeLoach
 SUBJECT: CHARLES BACON
 NATIONAL COMMANDER
 THE AMERICAN LEGION

DATE: December 2, 1961

The Director, by previous arrangement, saw Charles Bacon, National Commander, Mr. William F. March and [redacted] who travel with Commander Bacon at 10:00 a.m., 12-4-61. I introduced these gentlemen to the Director.

The Director expressed appreciation to Commander Bacon for the excellent assistance afforded the FBI in the past by The American Legion. Commander Bacon responded by stating he sincerely hoped the Director would call upon him in the future. He spoke of the Legion's great admiration for the Director.

The Director generally discussed matters of a public source nature regarding internal security. He told Commander Bacon and his party of his feelings regarding extremists of the right wing and the harm that such groups were doing to our fight against communism. The Director again mentioned that The American Legion had always been in the front of the battle against communism and he felt this battle should be continued. Commander Bacon assured him that it would be.

The Director briefly mentioned the attacks made upon Assistant Director Sullivan and other FBI spokesmen because of not agreeing with the extremists to the extent of infiltration into the clergy. The Director spoke generally of a number of personalities, among the clergy and otherwise, who have aided the communists in their fight yet have not been members of the Communist Party. He referred to Fidel Castro and the manner in which Castro had taken over from dictator Fulbright, Jr. Cuba. The Director advised Commander Bacon of the FBI's belief in Communist control of Castro since the time Castro took over the reins of government in Cuba. The Director drew an analogy of Castro's latest revolution simulating his personal experience with all along.

Upon leaving, Commander Bacon expressed the hopes of The American Legion that the Director would consent to be their principal speaker at the Legion's convention in Las Vegas the early part of October, 1962. The Director indicated a desire to comply with this request if at all possible. Commander Bacon again expressed his appreciation to the Director for the fight page carried on by the Director and the FBI against the enemies of the United States. The Director thanked Commander Bacon for his commendatory words and stated he would call upon him if he could be of any assistance.

1 - Mr. Jones
 C.D. DeLoach
 JUL 9 1962

In November 1970, Hoover met with Alfred B. Chamie, the new National Commander of the American Legion. During this meeting: **"The Director made mention of the John Birch Society and noted that this organization's leadership has mislead (sic) some good and well intended people. In this regard the Director cited the scurrilous allegations that Robert Welch made some years ago concerning the loyalty of the late General Eisenhower and the late John Foster Dulles, as examples of the type of disgraceful activity in which the leadership of the John Birch Society has been known to indulge."** [HQ 94-1-17998, #1950, 11/5/70 memo from M.A Jones to Mr. Bishop regarding Hoover meeting with Alfred P. Chamie.]

Birch Society representatives around the country often made requests for large quantities of FBI publications that they wished to distribute to the public. At first, the Bureau readily provided bulk quantities, but as the Bureau became more familiar with the ideology espoused by the JBS, it underwent a dramatic change of mind.

In March 1961, for example, FBI Assistant Director C.D. DeLoach prepared a memo concerning one particular JBS request which was made to the Los Angeles Field Office. Assistant-Special Agent-In-Charge William Alexander had been requested to provide 10,000 copies of a Bureau poster entitled **"What You Can Do To Fight Communism"**.

DeLoach noted that **"Alexander was advised that in view of the extremist position taken by this group that we should not, of course, have anything to do with them and that obviously they were attempting to capitalize on the Director's prestige...This is the group whose magazine carried the article that up to 80% of the top officials of DHEW are communists or under communist influence. They have accused former President Eisenhower of being a communist dupe and have called for the impeachment of the Supreme Court and have made similar ridiculous allegations."** [DHEW refers to Department of Health, Education, Welfare.]

In his concluding "Recommendation" paragraph, DeLoach wrote:

"In view of this irresponsible organization's attempt to capitalize on the Bureau's prestige, it is recommended that an SAC Letter be prepared instructing the field that no Bureau publications of any kind are to be made available to this group or any of its representatives...The field should

be told that requests for any attempts to reproduce Bureau publications by the John Birch Society group should be turned down." [HQ 62-104401-851, March 14, 1961, C.D. DeLoach to J. Mohr].

In a handwritten comment on the memo, J. Edgar Hoover wrote "YES" on the recommendation and, subsequently, the SAC Letter (HQ instructions to all of its Special-Agent-In-Charge of field offices) was sent to all FBI field offices. It advised the field offices:

"You should be alert to the possibility that this group may attempt to reproduce Bureau publications and distribute them giving the impression that the FBI sanctions JBS. Immediately advise the Bureau of any such information coming to your attention. Further, any requests by JBS to reproduce Bureau publications should be turned down." [SAC Letter 61-14, dated 3/21/61, section D].

A March 29, 1961 FBI memo discusses whether or not the Bureau should respond to a recent incoming letter from Robert Welch. The memo describes Welch as follows:

"He has extreme views, is very opinionated and both he and the JBS are particularly controversial in much of the country at this time."

The recommendation was: **"That the letters from Robert Welch of JBS dated 3/22-23/61 not be acknowledged."**

Hoover wrote **"OK"** on the memo and Associate Director Clyde Tolson wrote **"I agree"**.

In an April 1961 memo from J. Edgar Hoover to Attorney General Robert Kennedy, Hoover explained how the FBI responded to inquiries it received about the JBS and he then added the following comment which reveals his thinking about the JBS:

"However, in the Introduction to the *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* dated 4/1/61, I specifically pointed out the need for an objective and dispassionate approach in fighting the communist menace. I felt this step was necessary because of the rash of vigilante-type individuals and organizations springing up throughout the country which tend to depart from fact and use gossip, hearsay, and unsubstantiated charges in fighting communism. In the long run, such tactics will hinder rather than help in this fight." [HQ 62-104401, #990, 4/5/61, J. Edgar Hoover to Attorney General Robert Kennedy.]

In October 1961, J. Edgar Hoover told Attorney General Robert Kennedy about a 9/27/61 briefing on communism given at FBI headquarters to the American Bar Association Committee on Communist Tactics, Strategy and Objectives.

The Attorney General praised this activity and he then asked J. Edgar Hoover to consider a proposal for expanding such instruction to include FBI seminars on communism at FBI field offices for high school students and college freshmen **"to create a nucleus of informed students to help offset and combat the Communist drive for young members and to start the development of responsible and informed community leaders."**

The idea was to set up such seminars along the lines of what the Bureau did at the FBI National Academy for law enforcement officers from around the country. The Bureau's Domestic Intelligence Division subsequently analyzed this proposal in a 10/28/61 memo. The memo contains a paragraph entitled **"Arguments in Favor"** – copied below. Notice the reference to the JBS.

“Unquestionably there are apparent arguments in favor of such a procedure, including the reaching of a large segment of the American public during their formative years and thus thwarting to a great extent current recruiting drives among youths by the Communist Party USA, and combating the growth of extreme rightists as exemplified by the John Birch Society.” [HQ 62-106364, #72, 10/28/61 memo from Mr. Sullivan to Mr. Belmont, page 1; **my emphasis in red font**]

In May 1961, a JBS member wrote to Hoover to inquire whether or not a news report concerning an April 1961 speech in Tacoma WA by Chief Inspector W.C. Sullivan was accurate. The JBS member described Sullivan's remarks in the news article as "**amazing**". The comments by Sullivan which most disturbed the Bircher were:

"Communism has failed to make an impact on American education despite making teachers and students prime propaganda targets since 1919."

Hoover replied to this JBS member as follows:

"Your concern about communism is understandable. I feel strongly that members of the CP and its sympathizers in the U.S. represent a threat to our future security and...patriotic Americans must continue to take a firm stand against this menace...It is equally vital that this opposition be careful, constructive and positive...This is no time for rumors, unfounded suspicion, gossip and the hurling of false allegations...I am thoroughly familiar with Chief Inspector William C. Sullivan's presentation of the true nature and objectives of communism. He treated the subject will all possible objectivity, candor, and accuracy." [HQ 62-104401, #1261, 5/4/61 incoming letter from JBS member and J. Edgar Hoover 5/15/61 reply]

In July 1961 the Bureau received a letter from Arthur S. Lyon who was a North Carolina JBS Coordinator. Lyon implored Hoover to make a statement about the JBS in view of "**a cruel and continuous smear campaign since it began its attempt to impeach Earl Warren.**" The Bureau reply has a notation on the file copy that Lyon was not being sent any publications since he was a JBS employee. A subsequent letter from Lyon was disregarded because he was identified as a JBS Coordinator. [HQ 62-104401, #1377, 7/24/61 letter from Arthur S. Lyon and #1557, 12/18/61.]

J. Edgar Hoover spoke before, and received numerous accolades and awards from, scores of organizations. One particular Hoover speech in December 1961 disturbed a considerable number of JBS members or sympathizers and they wrote to Hoover to ask if newspaper accounts of his speech were accurate, and if so, they asked Hoover for clarification of his remarks.

The speech, entitled "*The Faith To Be Free*" was a fairly standard Hoover pep talk about the strengths of our country as well as a fairly typical Hoover warning about the dangers which criminal elements and subversives posed within American society. Nevertheless, Birchers expressed concern about the following Hoover comments which contradicted standard JBS dogma and/or which Birchers assumed Hoover directed at groups like the JBS---even though he mentioned no names.

"The extent of the menace posed by the philosophy of communism is clear-cut and obvious. However, it is absolutely necessary that we attack and oppose it calmly, rationally and objectively...The Communist Party in this country has attempted to infiltrate and subvert every segment of our society. The Party's efforts have been thwarted in this country by the Government's internal security programs, by investigation, arrest and prosecution of Party functionaries, and by widespread intelligent public opposition to the communist philosophy." ...

"Let us be for America all the way; but, at the same time, let us not be taken in by those who promote hysteria by the distortion and misrepresentation of the true facts whether they be the proponents of chauvinism of the extreme right or pseudo liberalism of the extreme left." [J. Edgar Hoover, *The Faith To Be Free*, 12/7/61 remarks upon receiving the Criss Award, pages 5 and 7.]

One self-identified JBS member criticized the Hoover speech reference to the "extreme right" because he (correctly) thought Hoover was referring to groups like the JBS plus he thought Hoover's comments would **"put the few alert patriots back in a coma...so the Socialist New Frontiersmen and U.N. one worlders can takeover soon."** The file copy of the Bureau reply to his letter has the following notation: **"In view of his sarcastic remarks, his muddled thinking and his dogmatic views, it is not felt his letter should be acknowledged."** [HQ 62-104401, #1644, 2/20/62 incoming letter from JBS member.]

Another Bircher wrote to Hoover and described himself as "confused" by Hoover's comments. Hoover offered this clarification in his reply:

"I firmly believe that it is vital that each of us make a determined effort to gain a broad knowledge of the objectives and operations of the communist conspiracy so that we may effectively resist its influence. This will help to avoid the danger of confusing communism with legitimate dissent. To erroneously brand an individual as a communist is to do a grave injustice. It is imperative that we remain calm, rational, and thoroughly accurate in what we say and do in opposing this subversive philosophy. This is no time for rumors, unfounded suspicion, gossip, or the hurling of false accusations." [HQ 62-104401, #1657, 2/27/62 Hoover reply to JBS member.]

There are numerous similar instances where self-identified Birch Society members wrote letters to Hoover but the Bureau chose not to acknowledge receipt or reply to them because comments made by JBS partisans were considered irrational and extremist in tone and substance.

The FBI's Dallas office received reports that JBS members in the Dallas area had claimed that the FBI was supporting JBS activities. Hoover instructed the Dallas office to contact source(s) of that report and they **"should be told in no uncertain terms to cease and desist from making any statements such as those set out above...indicating the Bureau is in agreement with or in back of any of their activities."** [HQ 62-104401, #1443, 9/19/61, SAC Dallas to Hoover and 9/29/61 Hoover reply.]

On April 17, 1962, Congressman Claude Pepper of Florida ran an advertisement in the *Miami News* captioned **"Birchites Are Behind The Smear Against Claude Pepper"**. The Bureau received an inquiry asking whether or not Director Hoover had approved use of his name in the advertisement as one of several prominent persons who had spoken out against **"smear tactics of these irresponsible fanatics who are the major internal enemies of our country"**.

At the bottom of a Bureau memo discussing the matter, Hoover handwrote: **"I would no more give a boost to Pepper than I would to the Birchites. They are two extremes and equally bad."** [HQ 62-104401, no serial #, April 27, 1962, D.C. Morrell to C.D. DeLoach]. See Hoover comment below in right corner of memo.



The Bureau received thousands of inquiries about the Birch Society and the numerous allegations made in its literature or in speeches/interviews by its officials and members. The Bureau developed several standard replies to answer people who wanted to know Director Hoover's evaluation about the John Birch Society and its founder, Robert Welch.

One of the standard replies was based upon comments made by Hoover at a press conference on November 18, 1964. The main focus of the press conference was Hoover's evaluation of the Warren Commission Report which had just been released. This was also the press conference where Hoover made his famous comment that Martin Luther King Jr. was **"the most notorious liar in the country"**. Many newspapers reported Hoover's remarks on the Warren Commission report and MLK Jr. but ignored Hoover's remarks on Welch which were as follows:

"Personally, I have little respect for the head of the John Birch Society since he linked the names of former President Dwight D. Eisenhower, the late John Foster Dulles, and former CIA Director Allen Dulles with communism." [HQ 62-104401, #2381, 11/20/64 and HQ 100-114578-152, October 22, 1965 and 62-104401, #3865, 3/24/72.]

NOTE: With respect to former Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, Robert Welch described Dulles in his 1950's manuscript, *The Politician*, on page 166 as **"this Kremlin-serving hypocrite"** and then later summarized his contempt for Dulles:

"For many reasons and after a lot of study, I personally believe Dulles to be a Communist agent who has had one clearly defined role to play; namely, always to say the right things and always to do the wrong ones." [Robert Welch, *The Politician*, chapter 16, "Associates and Appointments", bottom of page 223; privately printed, 1963.]

The FBI evaluation of Dulles appears in a December 1955 memo from Assistant Director Milton A. Jones to Assistant Director Louis B. Nichols. In a section of that memo captioned **"Attitude of Communists Toward Dulles"**, Jones observed: **"Dulles continues to be a Communist symbol of capitalist reaction. He is constantly under attack by the Communist press and individual Party members..."**

The memo then presents numerous examples of Communist hostility toward Dulles. See pages 33-34 of the Dulles-FBI file (HQ 62-84466, serial #11, dated 12/20/55) -- link below

<https://archive.org/stream/DullesJohnFosterHQ1/Dulles%2C%20John%20Foster-HQ-1#page/n31/mode/2up>

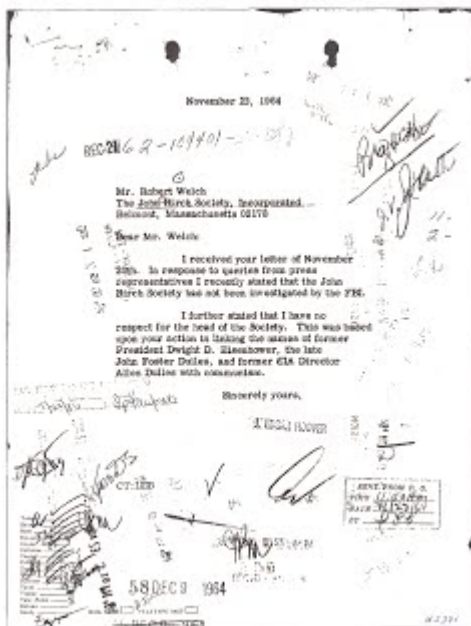
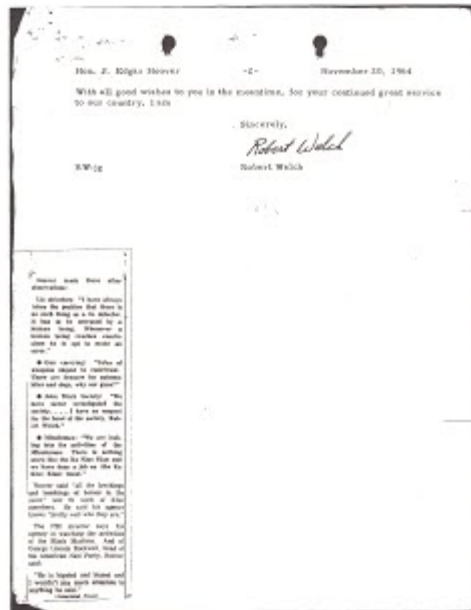
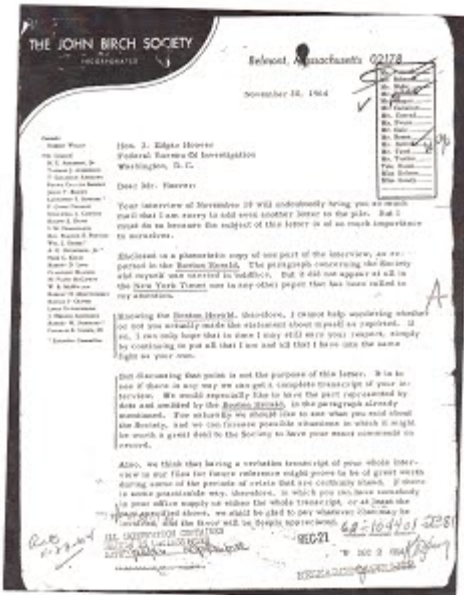
Associate Director Clyde Tolson recognizing the impact that Hoover's hostile comment about Welch would have and anticipating the probable deluge of inquiries about it, suggested standard wording for all Bureau replies. Hoover wrote **"Yes"** and initialed the memo (see HQ 62-104401, #2359, 11/20/64 Tolson to Hoover.

See copy of this memo here:

https://archive.org/stream/foia_John_Birch_Society-HQ-37/John_Birch_Society-HQ-37#page/n27/mode/2up

JBS Public Relations Director John Rousselot and Robert Welch both wrote to Hoover to inquire if press reports about his comments were accurate. Welch wrote on 11/20/64 (serial #2381). He said he read Hoover's comments in the Boston newspaper and "I can only hope that in time I may still earn your respect, simply by continuing to put all that I am and that I have into the same fight as your own."

Below is Robert Welch's letter to Hoover and Hoover's 11/23/64 reply:



Also see Hoover's testimony (copied below) before the Warren Commission [Volume V, page 101—link provided below; scroll to bottom of page] when he was asked about an article on JFK's assassination that was published in the JBS magazine, *American Opinion*.

<http://www.jfk-assassination.de/warren/wch/vol5/page101.php>

Significantly, Hoover ignored the specific question he was asked and, instead, used the inquiry as an opportunity to characterize Robert Welch and the JBS as "extremist" without mentioning their names:

"Mr. Hoover: I have read that piece. My comment on it is this in general: I think the extreme right is just as much a danger to the freedom of this country as the extreme left. There are groups, organizations, and individuals on the extreme right who make these very violent statements, allegations that General Eisenhower was a Communist, disparaging references to the Chief Justice and at the other end of the spectrum you have these leftists who make wild statements charging almost anybody with being a Fascist or belonging to some of these so-called extreme right societies. "

"Now, I have felt, and I have said publicly in speeches, that they are just as much a danger, at either end of the spectrum. They don't deal with facts. Anybody who will allege that General Eisenhower was a Communist agent, has something wrong with him. A lot of people read such allegations because I get some of the weirdest letters wanting to know whether we have inquired to find out whether that is true. I have known General Eisenhower quite well myself and I have found him to be a sound, level-headed man."

The FBI often had very negative evaluations about the post-FBI endeavors of its former security informants or Special Agents who subsequently attached themselves to the JBS as members, endorsers, speakers, or authors. Examples include former FBI Special Agents Dan Smoot and W. Cleon Skousen. [See chapter 7 of this Report for more details as well as my separate reports on both Smoot and Skousen.]

In September 1961, conservative columnist George Sokolsky wrote a column entitled "*The Crackpots*" which addressed the danger to the conservative and anti-communist movements presented by former FBI Special Agents who associated themselves with right-wing extremist groups such as the Birch Society.

In his column, Sokolsky observed: "Particularly offensive are some who call themselves former FBI agents, thus giving to themselves labels which provide the appearance of special knowledge...Naturally, it is an advantage to a man to have served in the FBI but like all organizations, it has men on top and men who never rise; it has men who are efficient and those who have to be let out because they do not make good. Employment by the FBI is not a permanent badge of efficiency, knowledge, or responsibility. When a fellow advertises himself as a former FBI agent, the proper inquiry should be, *why former?* The reason I emphasize this point is that there is an upsurge of conservatism in this country and there are many opportunists who jump on the conservative bandwagon and who claim special knowledge and special advantages."

Upon reading the Sokolsky column J. Edgar Hoover sent Sokolsky a letter which expressed

"...my sincere congratulations for your great column [*"The Crackpots"*] of September 5. It is time someone set the record straight by exposing these opportunists who capitalize on their former employment with this Bureau. Motivated by selfish ambition, they exploit the name and record of the FBI achieved through the years by the diligent effort and self-sacrifice of so many loyal men and women. My associates and I deeply appreciate your excellent treatment of this matter..." [HQ 62-89885, #209, 9/6/61 J, Edgar Hoover to George Sokolsky.]

In September 1965, James D. Bales, Professor of Christian Doctrine at Harding College (Searcy AR), sought permission from the FBI to publish a compilation of J. Edgar Hoover's public comments about Communism but Hoover refused to authorize such a publication.

One FBI memo reports that Bales had written to Robert Welch to inquire if the JBS publishing house (Western Islands) would be interested in publishing such a compilation of Hoover's comments about communism, entitled "*J. Edgar Hoover on Communism*". Robert Welch was enthusiastic and the JBS drew up a contract with Bales. A JBS representative met

with an FBI Special Agent in Boston to discuss the idea. [HQ 62-104401, #3151; 6/26/67 memo from R.E. Wick to Assistant Director Cartha D. DeLoach, page 1.]

Page 2 of the memo has the following summary of the 1965 contact by Bales:

"In a memorandum prepared at this time, it was noted that Bales corresponded frequently with the Bureau and that Harding College is well known as a right-wing anticommunist center (and) is a source of extremist-type literature in the field of anti-communism. It was noted that it would be highly unwise for the Director to be associated publicly with Harding College."

Bales sent a letter to J. Edgar Hoover dated 9/14/66 stating that despite the FBI's rejection of his proposal, he intended to go forward with it because Hoover's comments were already in the public domain. The FBI memo then observes:

"Following receipt of the above letter from Bales, he was removed from the Special Correspondents' List and he was again told the Director could not give any permission to either publish this manuscript as a book or to circulate it in any manner."

Page 3 of memo "*Observations and Recommendation*" observes:

"It is felt the Director should remain firm in continuing to deny Bales and also the JBS permission to publish excerpts from the Director's quotations on communism. It is not felt that such a book could possibly give a balanced view of the Director's statements and in view of the extremist position taken by both Bales and the Birch Society, it is anticipated that the Director could be subject to public criticism by any implied association with Bales and the Birch Society."

Chapter 2

FBI vs. JBS EVALUATION OF INTERNAL SECURITY STATUS OF U.S.

During the 1960's and subsequently, the essence of John Birch Society thought was that a vast conspiracy of Communists, Communist sympathizers, and Communist dupes and agents made substantial inroads into all areas of U.S. society.

In 1967 for example, the Birch Society reprinted, in pamphlet form, a section from a *JBS Bulletin* entitled "*This Is It!*" JBS founder/leader Robert Welch declared on page 5:

"Finally...let us re-assert with reluctance and regret but with complete assurance, that Communists now are, and for several years have been, in full working control of our federal government.."

The annual Birch Society "*Scoreboard*" issue of *American Opinion* magazine, reported in three consecutive years that the extent of such Communist influence and control had reached a staggering 50-70% level of success and in 1964 reached 60-80%. [*American Opinion Scoreboard* issues, July-August 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964].

At about this time, Congressman Carl Elliott of Alabama wrote to Hoover to request a statement concerning the status of our internal security. Hoover's response to Elliott was published as a letter-to-the-Editor in the *Tri-Cities Daily* of Sheffield, Alabama on Sunday March 31, 1963 and variations of its wording became the standard Bureau reply to incoming inquiries from persons alarmed by Birch Society assertions:

"The Communist Party in this country has attempted to infiltrate and subvert every segment of our society, but its continuing efforts have not achieved success of any substance. Too many self-styled experts on communism, without valid credentials and without any access whatsoever to classified factual data regarding the inner workings of the conspiracy, have engaged in rumor-mongering and hurling false and wholly unsubstantiated allegations against persons whose views differ from their own. This is dangerous business. It is divisive and unintelligent, and makes more difficult the task of the professional investigator."

[Also see identical or comparable Hoover statements in February 5, 1962 letter 94-1-369-1676 to Mrs. W.R. Brown of Bountiful Utah as well as July 29, 1964 letter HQ 62-109421-44 and August 6, 1964 letter HQ 62-100942-156. Also see Hoover "Faith To Be Free" speech, 12/7/61, p5]

In his letter to Mrs. Brown, Hoover expanded upon the comments he subsequently wrote to Congressman Elliott:

"All this has been accomplished in orderly constitutional fashion and is something of which every American should be proud. We must continue to be alert to these infiltration efforts. I wish to emphasize most strongly that communism is a grave threat to the continued existence of the United States. Because of this, it is doubly imperative that we be calm, rational, and thoroughly accurate in what we say and do in opposing communism. This is no time for rumors, unfounded suspicions, gossip and the hurling of false accusations."

During 1961 and 1962 Hoover went on the record numerous times to warn against the dangers of extremism. In an obvious reference to groups like the JBS, Hoover made comments such as the following:

"Our fight against communism must be a sane, rational understanding of the facts. Emotional outbursts, extravagant name-calling, gross exaggerations hinder our efforts. We must remember that many noncommunists may legitimately on their own oppose the same laws or take positions on issues of the day which are also held by the communists. Their opinions—though temporarily coinciding with the Party line—do not make them communists. Not at all. We must be very careful with our facts and not brand as a communist any individual whose opinion may be different from our own. Freedom of dissent is a great heritage of America which we must treasure."

"Today, far too many self-styled experts on communism are plying the highways of America giving erroneous and distorted information. This causes hysteria, false alarms, misplaced apprehension by many of our citizens. We need enlightenment about communism---but this information must be factual, accurate and not tailored to echo personal idiosyncrasies. To quote an old aphorism, we need more light and less heat." [J. Edgar Hoover, *Shall It Be Law or Tyranny?*, *American Bar Association Journal*, February 1962, page 120]

"Unfortunately, there are those who make the very mistake the Communists are so careful to avoid. These individuals concentrate on the negative rather than on the positive. They are merely against communism without being for any positive measures to eliminate the social, political, and economic frictions which the Communists are so adroit at exploiting. These persons would do well to recall a recent lesson from history. Both Hitler and Mussolini were against communism. However, it was by what they stood for, not against, that history has judged them." [U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary. Subcommittee To Investigate The Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws, *The Communist Party Line*, 1961, page 6]

"There exists today in our land a vital 'rift' which the communists are exploiting. Unfortunately, this involves certain people across the country who engage in reckless charges against one another. The label of 'communist' is too often indiscriminately attached to those whose views differ from the majority...Attributing every adversity to communism is not only irrational, but contributes to hysteria and fosters groundless fears...This is neither the time for inaction nor vigilante action..." [*FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, Hoover's Introductory Message, April 1961.]

"Here are some suggestions for individuals and organizations wishing to aid the FBI in the internal security field...Be sure to report all facts in your possession relating to espionage, sabotage, or subversive activities to the FBI...Avoid reporting idle rumors and malicious gossip. Do not circulate

rumors about subversive activities or draw conclusions from information coming to your attention. The data you possess may be incomplete or only partially accurate and by drawing conclusions or circulating rumors you can cause grave injustices to innocent persons. Hysteria, witch hunts, and vigilante activities weaken our security. It is just as important to protect the innocent as it is to identify our enemies. Refrain from making private investigations. Report the information you have to the FBI and the leave the checking of data to trained investigators..." [*Internal Security*, Statement by J. Edgar Hoover, April 17, 1962]

Number of "Communists" and "Communist Sympathizers" Within The United States

During his anti-Communist career, Robert Welch (and the JBS) frequently made bold assertions containing numerical statements or percentages about Communist "influence and control" within agencies, organizations, or the U.S. as a whole – but Welch routinely inflated the numbers provided by his original sources of information OR, more commonly, the numbers he used were just abstract inventions with no coherent meaning other than to illustrate his grim view of our internal security status.

It is often difficult to take comments made by Robert Welch and/or the JBS seriously because of the frequent manifest internal illogic revealed in their thought processes. For example:

1958:

The first *American Opinion* (AO) magazine "Scoreboard" issue (July-August 1958) is self-described as "a tabulation...undertaken to estimate the present degree of Communist influence or control over the economic and political affairs of almost all of the nations of the world...The total extent of Communist control or influence over any country, however, is due to the impact of all Communist pressures, direct and indirect, visible and undercover, working together."

AO claimed that it used "conservative" appraisals as of June 1, 1958. The United States' score at that time was only 20-40%. But in 1958, according to Robert Welch, "a dedicated conscious agent of the Communist conspiracy" was in the Presidency, and Communist "tools" or "dupes" headed major government Departments such as Allen Dulles (CIA), Neil McElroy (Defense Department) and John Foster Dulles (State Department) and Earl Warren (U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice).

1960:

In private remarks to the first meeting of his JBS National Council on January 9, 1960, at the Union League Club in Chicago, Welch made these observations about the gravity of our situation:

"From a careful and realistic study of the mountainous pile of evidence that is there for all to see, certain terrifying conclusions are objectively inescapable. Among them are:

- (1) The Communists are winning their large victories, as they always have, through the cumulative effect of small gains;
- (2) They make these gains chiefly through the conniving assistance of many of the very diplomats and officials who are supposed to be opposing them;
- (3) Communist influences are now in almost complete working control of our government;
- (4) And hence, the United States Government is today, as it has been for many years, the most important and powerful single force promoting the world-wide Communist advance."

[A Confidential Report To Members Of The Council of The John Birch Society – minutes of 1/9/60 meeting held at Union League Club in Chicago IL, page 1-2; minutes signed by Robert Welch.]

Furthermore, according to Robert Welch:

"Today, gentlemen, I can assure you, without the slightest doubt in my own mind that the takeover at the top is, for all practical purposes, virtually complete. Whether you like it or not, or whether you believe it or not, our Federal Government is already, literally in the hands of the Communists." [Ibid, page 2]

"In our two states with the largest population, New York and California...already the two present Governors are almost certainly actual Communists...Our Congress now contains a number of men like Adam Clayton Powell of New York and Charles Porter of Oregon, who are certainly actual Communists, and plenty more who are sympathetic to Communist purposes for either ideological or opportunistic reasons." [Ibid, page 7]

[Note: the reference to Governors refers to Edmund G. Brown of California and Nelson Rockefeller of New York.]

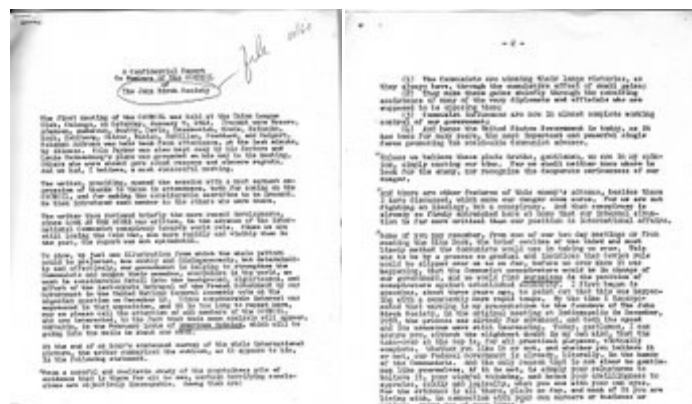
"In the Senate, there are men like Stephen Young of Ohio, and Wayne Morse of Oregon, McNamara of Michigan, and Clifford Case of New Jersey and Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota and Estes Kefauver of Tennessee and John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts, whom it is utter folly to think of as just liberals. Every one of those men is either an actual Communist or so completely a Communist sympathizer or agent that it makes no practical difference..." [Ibid, page 8]

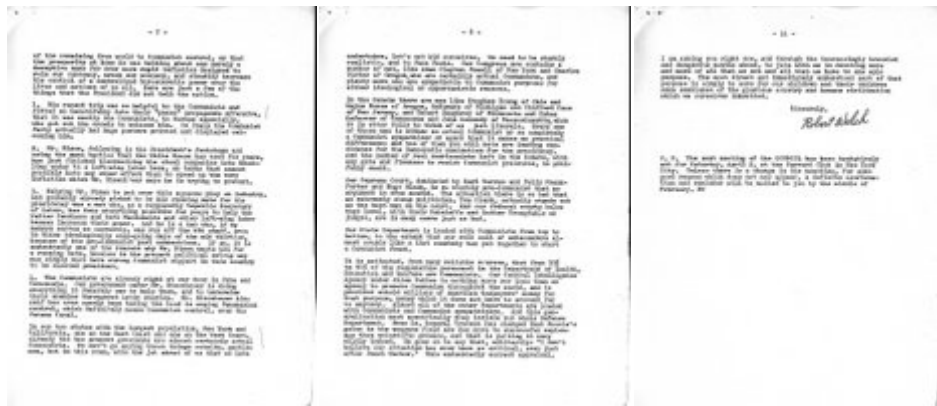
"Our Supreme Court, dominated by Earl Warren and Felix Frankfurter and Hugo Black, is so visibly pro-Communist that no argument is even needed...And our federal courts below that level...are in many cases just as bad." [Ibid, page 8]

"Our State Department is loaded with Communists from top to bottom, to the extent that our roll call of Ambassadors almost sounds like a list somebody has put together to start a Communist front." ... [Ibid, page 8]

"It is estimated from many reliable sources that from 70% to 90% of the responsible personnel in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare are Communists. Our Central Intelligence Agency under Allen Dulles is nothing more or less than an agency to promote Communism throughout the world...Almost all the other Departments are loaded with Communists and Communist sympathizers. And this generalization most specifically does include our whole Defense Department." [Ibid, page 8]

See pages 1-2, 7-8 and signature by Welch on page 11 below





The AO "Scoreboard" issue for 1960 reflected a U.S. "score" of 40-60%. If one uses the mid-way 50% score, then presumably Communists were successful only half the time in exerting their "influence or control over the economic and political affairs" of the U.S. despite Welch's claims of pervasive Communist penetration into all areas of our government---including multiple cabinet agencies---as Welch described it to his National Council in January 1960.

More amazingly, in April 1961, Welch said that President John F. Kennedy was "less a captive of Communist influences" than former President Eisenhower, but nevertheless the 1961 AO Scoreboard issue score increased to 50-70%! [Washington DC Evening Star, 4/14/61, pA14]

Then there is the matter of how Welch defined and applied the terms he used to characterize internal security matters.

April 1961:

During a nationwide speaking tour which began at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles on April 11, 1961 Welch stated that "a comparatively few thousand Communists, concentrated in key departments and agencies of our Government ..have done a terrific job of determining both the policies and the actions of those agencies and departments and hence indirectly of our whole government." [my emphasis in bold type -- Robert Welch, *Through All The Days To Be*, reprinted in *The New Americanism And Other Speeches and Essays* by Robert Welch, Western Islands Publishers, 1966, page 84.]

Furthermore, "ever since 1945 or 1946 at best, and perhaps from an earlier date, our government has been the most powerful single force supporting the steady worldwide Communist advance---while always pretending, of course, to oppose that advance." ... [Ibid, page 85.]

By contrast, according to the FBI Security Index report dated April 24, 1961, there were only 24 known or suspected Communist Party members or sympathizers working in the entire U.S. Government as of April 14, 1961! [HQ 100-358086, #2900, 4/24/61.]

July 1961:

According to Robert Welch:

"...we believe that there are not more than 300,000 to 500,000 Communists in our country (or about 1/4 of 1% of our population) and not more than a million allies, dupes, and sympathizers whom they can count on for any conscious support..." [JBS Bulletin, July 1961, page 14]

Thus, in total, Welch thought there were about 1.3 to 1.5 million Communists, Communist dupes, Communist sympathizers and Communist allies in the United States as of July 1961.

However, in March 1967, Welch stated that 2% of the U.S. population was "*Communist*". The U.S. population in 1967 was 198,712,056 so Welch's 2% estimate would mean 3,974,240 Communists in the United States. [San Francisco Examiner, 3/9/67, page 11; UPI report: "**Birch Chief Says U.S. Is 60 to 80 Percent Red Controlled**"]

This is but one of numerous examples which reveal that Welch just fabricated meaningless statistical data in an effort to make readers or listeners believe he was a serious person with special insights but, subsequently, he would often contradict his own original fabrications.

THE ACTUAL number of CP members in the United States in July 1961 according to the FBI was **5262** -- i.e. nothing remotely close to Welch's perception of 300,000 to 500,000 or Welch's even more absurd 4 million estimate! [See FBI New York field file 100-80638, serial #1882, which is a 6/30/61 FBI Chart of CPUSA Membership, by state, by FBI field divisions and by CPUSA Districts. The first page of that summary is copied below].

The document is a table titled "MEMBERSHIP SUMMARY" with the subtitle "The following figures are for the month of July 1961". It lists membership counts for various states and districts. The states listed include Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. The total membership is listed as 5,262.

ALSO: Apparently CPUSA members and their "**allies, dupes, and sympathizers whom they can count of for any conscious support...**" never got their memo (aka orders) because the number of votes which CPUSA candidates have been able to generate during our Presidential elections has never remotely approached the delusional number suggested by Robert Welch. Here is the actual summary:

Year	President	Vice President	Votes	Percent	Name
1924	William Z. Foster	Benjamin Gitlow	38,669	0.13%	Workers Party of America
1928	William Z. Foster	Benjamin Gitlow	48,551	0.13%	Workers (Communist) Party of America
1932	William Z. Foster	James W. Ford	103,307	0.26%	Communist Party USA
1936	Earl Browder	James W. Ford	79,315	0.17%	
1940	Earl Browder	James W. Ford	48,557	0.10%	
1948	No candidate, endorsed Henry Wallace	No candidate, endorsed Glen H. Taylor	N/A		
1952	No candidate, endorsed Vincent Hallinan	No candidate, endorsed Charlotta Bass			

1968	Charlene Mitchell	Michael Zagarell	1,077	0.00%	
1972	Gus Hall	Jarvis Tyner	25,597	0.03%	
1976	Gus Hall	Jarvis Tyner	58,709	0.07%	
1980	Gus Hall	Angela Davis	44,933	0.05%	
1984	Gus Hall	Angela Davis	36,386	0.04%	

In fact, if you combine ALL the votes which every CPUSA Presidential candidate has won from 1924 through 1984, the grand total STILL does not approach Welch's estimate of 1.3 to 1.5 million Communists, Communist dupes, Communist sympathizers and Communist allies in the United States. [The 60-year combined total Party vote is 485,101].

There is one additional way to express how delusional Robert Welch and JBS senior officials were regarding the scope of the internal security problem which existed in the United States. JBS National Council member Paul H. Talbert of California made a statement which echoed something which Robert Welch also said when asked about the number of Communists in the U.S.

Talbert said:

"Even though there are relatively only a few Communists, for every one there are 10 people standing ready to do their bidding and for each of these are another 10 -- the do-gooder type -- willing to go along with them." [See *Los Angeles Times*, March 5, 1961 article "*The John Birch Society: What Are Its Purposes?*" by Gene Blake; also reprinted in the *Congressional Record*, 3/5/61, page 4270]

So using that formula, then (according to Welch, Talbert and the JBS), Welch's estimate of 300,000 to 500,000 CP members in the U.S. would be augmented by 3,000,000 to 5,000,000 more Americans who stood ready **"to do their bidding"** and, then, another 30,000,000 to 50,000,000 Americans, i.e. **"the do-gooder type, willing to go along with them."**

Consequently, in the aggregate (from the JBS point of view) there were a minimum of 33,300,000 Americans to perhaps as many as 55,500,000 Americans who were Communists, Communist sympathizers or Communist agents (dupes and allies) in the U.S. as of 1961.

The total population of the U.S. in 1961 was 183,700,000 so according to Welch and the JBS, between 18% and 30% of the U.S. population was a national security risk because of their sympathies and pre-disposition to facilitating Communist Party objectives.

To support the Birch Society's delusional evaluations regarding the status of our internal security, the JBS often used surrogates whom they considered "experts" -- such as Martin Dies, the former Chairman of the House Committee on Un-American Activities. In an article which Dies wrote for the JBS magazine entitled "The Menace Within", Dies declared that there were **"190,000 card-holding members of the Communist Party who, according to authoritative and sworn testimony were operative in the Communist Party in 1938."** [Martin Dies, "*The Menace Within*", *American Opinion* magazine, 04/66, page 99.]

According to the FBI, the actual number was 55,000. [Communist Party Membership stats per FBI monograph, "*Membership of the Communist Party USA 1919-1954*" = May 1955, page iii].

In that same article, Dies referred to **"Communist-inspired riots, looting, burning which occurred recently in Los Angeles..."** **This is another JBS falsehood.** See chapter 3 of my Report for details. I devote a major section to JBS falsehoods concerning the Los Angeles Riots of August 1965. Link = [CHAPTER 3](#)

For some additional historical context, the 1960 annual Inspection Report about the FBI's Domestic Intelligence Division reported the following data about the CPUSA and about the FBI's "Security Index" which was its method of quantifying the actual security risks in our country.

"Security informant coverage increased to 1507 (1439 as of 3/1/59). Live informants in Communist Party increased from 412 last inspection to 433 or 7.86% of estimated Party membership (5531)." [HQ 67-149000-161X2X1; 11/30/60 memo regarding Domestic Intelligence Division Inspection Report, by J.F. Malone to Mr. Mohr, page 4]

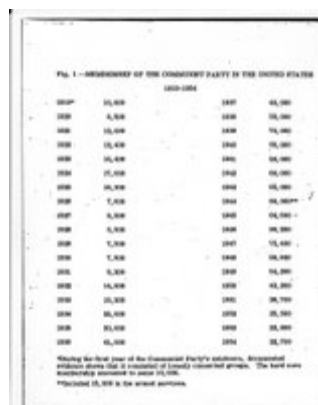
More significantly, the FBI's Security Index was designed to track all persons considered actually or potentially dangerous to U.S. internal security. It included known and suspected Communist Party members plus Communist sympathizers, leaders in Communist fronts, and anyone whom the Bureau considered a potential security risk.

At the time Welch made his statement in July 1961, the FBI's July 1961 Security Index report listed a total of 11,833 persons of which 9899 were in the "Communist" category--which included known or suspected Party members or sympathizers. Thus, while Welch perceived more than a million (or 3.9 million) Communist operatives or sympathizers, the FBI concluded that only 9899 Americans were a potential security concern. [HQ 100-358086, #2939].

According to the FBI:

"With the United States and the Soviet Union allied against Germany in World War II, the Party's membership soared to its zenith in 1944. Since then, except for a brief upsurge in 1946-1947, the Communist Party's membership has declined steadily until by the end of 1954 it national membership was less than that of 20 years ago." [FBI monograph, "Membership of the Communist Party USA, 1919-1954", May 1955, page iii].

The following chart taken from the above-referenced monograph reflects the actual Communist Party membership from 1919-1954:



The FBI's Security Index was intended to capture statistical data on all persons considered dangerous to the internal security of the United States as well as to identify persons "scheduled for apprehension under the Emergency Detention Program" in times of national emergency.

The Bureau discussed its SI procedures in a July 1958 memo:

"Every SI case is subjected to a penetrative review in the Subversive Control Section not only upon receipt of periodic reports required in these cases but in each instance that a case comes up for review

on tickler or otherwise. In connection therewith, our basic objective is to insure that we have included therein those individuals who would constitute a potential threat in time of emergency and each review of a security case is approached from that standpoint. Our criteria are sufficiently elastic to permit the retention of an individual's name in the SI when facts developed depict him as a dangerous individual even though evidence is lacking of membership and activity in a revolutionary organization within prescribed periods...We do not take steps to remove a name from the SI immediately upon determining that he is no longer a member of a prescribed organization. Many individuals in recent years belonging to the extreme left wing or the right wing of the Communist Party (CP) have publicly severed connection with the Party; however, many of these individuals remain confirmed Marxists and represent a potential threat and are retained in the SI." [FBI HQ file 100-358086, #2496; 7/30/58 memo regarding Security Index.]

In addition, the Bureau prepared periodic reports for three types of Security Index cases. The month that the Birch Society was founded (December 1958) the Bureau's summary was as follows:

(1) Top Functionaries: Presently included in the SI are the name of 34 individuals considered as 'top functionaries' in subversive organizations. These top functionaries represent the highest degree of leadership in subversive organizations and their activities are constantly being followed. We require the submission of quarterly reports in these cases.

(2) Key Figures: Throughout the field 686 individuals are considered as key figures in subversive movements. These individuals represent leadership in subversive organizations on regional, district and state levels. They represent a high degree of dangerousness and we follow their activities closely requiring the field to submit reports in these cases on a semiannual basis.

(3) Key Facilities: The SI contains the names of 384 individuals employed in various plants throughout the country designated as key facilities by the Department of Defense. A listing of these plants as key facilities indicates that they are of vital importance to national security. In order to keep the various branches of the Department of Defense fully informed of the activities of these individuals, we require reports at six-month intervals in these cases. [FBI 100-358086, no serial #; 12/19/58 memo entitled "Subversive Control Section Program Evaluation", pages 1-2].

Here then is a summary of January Security Index statistics for the "Communist" category in the period from 1956 thru 1962 as reflected in the FBI Security Index file [HQ 100-358086]

Date	Number of Communists and Sympathizers on SI	Fed Gov employees on SI (includes non-communists)
01/11/56	11,396	2
01/15/57	11,456	4
01/13/58	11,569	8
01/12/59	11,157	16
01/14/60	10,765	19
01/13/61	10,148	19
01/05/62	9,715	22

December 1961:

Assistant Attorney General J. Walter Yeagley (head of Internal Security Division of the U.S. Justice Dept.) wrote a letter to Robert Welch concerning Welch's 11/20/61 speech in Austin TX wherein he claimed that there were "a few thousand Communists concentrated in key departments" of the U.S. Government.

Yeagley observed:

"The charges you make are not to my knowledge supported by the material in the investigative files of government employees...(and) it is my responsibility to prosecute any Communist who may have falsely denied in government forms his membership in the Communist Party; and now under the Internal Security Act to prosecute any persons occupying a government position whom we can prove in court by legally admissible evidence to be a Communist Party member. Will you please turn over to the FBI at once the facts in your possession and the sources thereof which may establish that certain government employees are members of the Communist Party. It is the utmost importance that such data as you indicate you possess be made available for the use of the government at once." [HQ 62-104401, #1598, 12/8/61 Yeagley letter to Robert Welch.]

In August 1962 J. Edgar Hoover sent a memo to the Deputy Attorney General which reported that "Welch has not communicated with this Bureau to supply the information requested by Assistant Attorney General Yeagley's letter." [HQ 62-104401, #1746, 8/29/62 Hoover to Deputy Attorney General.]

Chapter 3

Communist Infiltration of Clergy and Religious Organizations

Numerous controversies erupted around the country on this topic and many of them were created by JBS members or supporters.

One of the first incidents was the January 4, 1960 release of the "*Air Reserve Training Manual*" which was issued by the Continental Air Command at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas. It was designed to be used in courses for Air Force Reserve noncommissioned officers assigned to the Continental Air Command. Approximately 3300 copies were distributed.

On February 17, 1960, Mr. James A. Wine, Associate General Secretary of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, released a statement to the press protesting that section of the manual which discussed Communist infiltration of churches because of its derogatory references to the NCCC.

The manual's section entitled "*Communism in Religion*" was written by Homer H. Hyde. Mr. Hyde subsequently acknowledged that he used information supplied to him by Billy James Hargis (Christian Crusade), and Myers Lowman (Circuit Riders, Inc) as the basis for his comments.

The themes and conclusions that Hyde used were identical to those contained in literature published by Church League of America (Edgar C. Bundy), *American Mercury* magazine (J.B. Matthews), Carl McIntire (Twentieth Century Reformation Hour), the John Birch Society (Robert Welch), and the aforementioned Billy James Hargis and Myers Lowman.

See Edgar Bundy report at: <http://ernie1241.googlepages.com/bundy-1>

The manual stated, among other things, that Communists had successfully infiltrated our churches, and that 30 of the 95 scholars associated with the *Revised Standard Version of the Bible* were affiliated with Communist fronts and activities.

ENTER THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY...

In April 1960, Robert Welch told his members that...

"...the largest single group supporting the Communist apparatus in the United States is composed of members of the Protestant clergy" --and—

"...there are, as the leading students of the subject all agree -- more than seven thousand Protestant clergymen actively helping the Communists to make dangerous propaganda and pressure weapons out of the National Council of Churches and some other church organizations. Now is the time to bring this whole issue into the open, in every way possible; and to start a determined drive to eliminate Communist influences from control over Christian churches." [*John Birch Society Bulletin*, April 1960, pages 18-19].

During a nationwide speaking tour which began at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles on April 11, 1961 Mr. Welch expanded upon his comments. The nationwide tour included the following cities: 4/13/61, Santa Barbara CA; 4/14/61 Phoenix AZ; 4/15/61 Amarillo TX; 4/18/61 Houston TX; 6/24/61 Minneapolis MN; 10/11/61 Oakland PA, and 10/12/61 in Indianapolis IN.

During his speech Welch stated that with respect to Protestant ministers, "the estimates I have seen which appeared most trustworthy indicate that about 7000 of them could fairly be called Comsymps...A Comsymp is a man who is either a Communist or a sympathizer with Communist purposes. So the number of Comsymps in the whole Protestant ministry would thus come out as about three percent." [Robert Welch, *Through All The Days To Be*, reprinted in *The New Americanism And Other Speeches and Essays* by Robert Welch, Western Islands Publishers, 1966, page 79.]

Another trigger in this controversy was the publication of several articles authored by Louis Cassels, a Senior Editor and Religion columnist for United Press International.

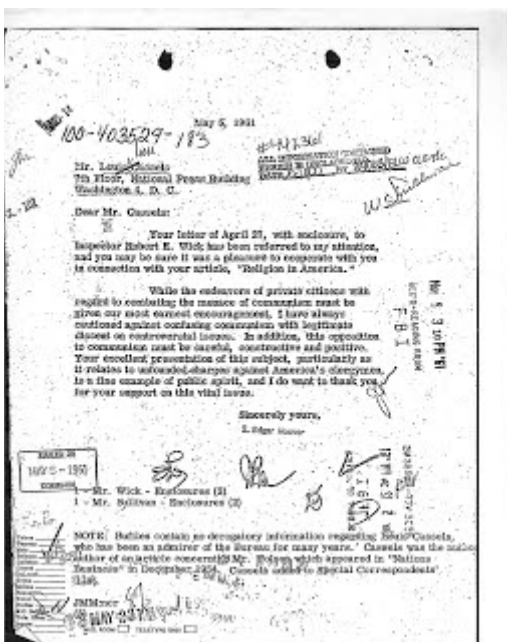
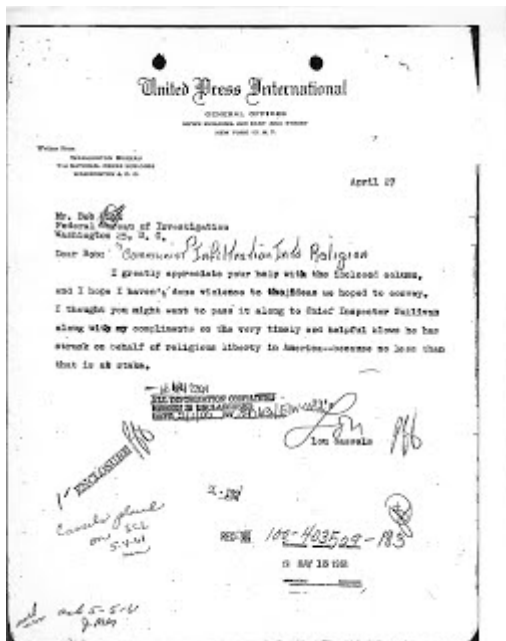
In April 1961, Mr. Cassels wrote an article for his weekly newspaper column, *Religion in America*, which provoked an enormous outcry from the extreme right. The Cassels column summarized speeches made around the country during the Spring of 1961 by FBI Chief Inspector William C. Sullivan.

In those speeches, Sullivan denied that there had been significant Communist penetration of U.S. clergy or churches. Subsequently, Mr. Cassels wrote two magazine articles which further aggravated the controversy. ("*What About Communism In Our Churches?*", *The Episcopalian*, July 1961 --and-- "*The Rightist Crisis In Our Churches*", *Look* magazine, April 24, 1962.]

Mr. Cassels sent a copy of his April 28, 1961 column to his FBI contact (Inspector Robert E. Wick) and then Hoover replied to Cassels:

"...you may be sure that it was a pleasure to cooperate with you in connection with your article...While the endeavors of private citizens with regard to combating the menace of communism must be given our most earnest encouragement, I have always cautioned against confusing communism with legitimate dissent on controversial issues. In addition, this opposition to communism must be careful, constructive and positive. Your excellent presentation of this subject particularly as it relates to unfounded charges against America's clergymen, is a fine example of public spirit, and I do want to thank you for your support on this vital issue. Sincerely yours, J. Edgar Hoover." [HQ 100-403529-183, 5/5/61 J. Edgar Hoover letter to Louis Cassels].

Below are scanned copies of the April 1961 column by Cassels, the letter by Cassels to FBI Inspector Wick, and the complimentary letter from J. Edgar Hoover to Cassels about his column:



As newspapers across the country published the Cassels column, the Bureau was inundated with angry letters, phone calls, and telegrams from persons and organizations that were stunned by the remarks attributed to FBI Chief Inspector William Sullivan.

There were incredulous letters from ordinary citizens and furious objections by organizations such as Church League of America (Edgar C. Bundy) and Twentieth Century Reformation Hour (Carl McIntire) and Circuit Riders, Inc. (Myers G. Lowman)---all of whom demanded that J. Edgar Hoover set the record straight.

Circuit Riders was an organization that specialized in publishing "compilations" of alleged subversive affiliations of various groups of clergymen under such titles as: "A Compilation of Public Records on 2109 Methodist Ministers" and "658 Clergymen and Laymen Connected With The National Council of Churches" and "42% of the Unitarian Clergy and 450 Rabbis."

In March 1961 the Bureau received a phone call from a representative of Circuit Riders, who demanded to know if Hoover had approved Sullivan's remarks. A Bureau memo summarizes the encounter:

"Per DeLoach to Mohr memo dated 3-3-61, Myers Lowman of Circuit Riders called SOG [Seat of Government-FBI HQ] on that day and made an emotional objection to a speech previously given by Inspector William C. Sullivan. Lowman was informed that Mr. Sullivan was speaking with the full experience and background of facts concerning matters known to the Bureau and Mr. Sullivan was in no manner incorrect in any statements made." [HQ 62-104401-1231, 3/3/61].

A 1964 Bureau memo reveals their evaluation of Myers Lowman:

"Lowman and his organization are well known to us. He is an extremist and you will recall that in March 1961, he telephoned your (Mr. DeLoach's) office to complain that Assistant Director Sullivan's approach to communism was a serious deterrent to those trying to expose this menace. The Director noted at that time that Lowman *'is a fanatic and therefore irresponsible'*. According to our files as of June 1962, the IRS was investigating him for not having filed income tax returns for a period of nine years. SAC Mason recently advised us that this matter is still not adjudicated. SAC Mason advised that Lowman contacts him approximately once a year and he has noted that Lowman has been becoming visibly more nervous and unstable, and appears to be on the verge of a nervous breakdown." [HQ 62-104576, #unrecorded; 2/17/64 memo from M.A. Jones to DeLoach in Edgar Bundy/Church League of America file].

As might be expected, numerous Birchers wrote to Hoover to demand that he repudiate both Cassels and William Sullivan. One Escondido CA Bircher asked Hoover why Sullivan was permitted to make such speeches because it diminished the idea of any significant Communist infiltration into our clergy and religious institutions and contradicted Hoover's own comments on the matter. Hoover replied:

"In connection with the matter you mentioned, representatives of the FBI who are privileged to speak before various groups throughout the country do so with my full knowledge and approval. I can assure you that their remarks on communism do not repudiate in any way statements I have made...Assistant Director William C. Sullivan in his discussion of communism dealt with this subject accurately and objectively." [HQ 62-104401, #1348, 6/28/61 JBS member to Hoover and 7/5/61 Hoover reply.]

Another major player in this controversy was the American Council of Christian Laymen (ACCL), headed by Verne P. Kaub. Kaub authored one of the most widely distributed and long-lived pamphlets used by the extreme right to "*document*" their statements about the alleged "*Communist affiliations*" of many prominent clergymen.

The first edition in October 1949 was entitled, "*How Red is the Federal Council of Churches?*" but the title was later revised to reflect the subsequent merger and name-change of the FCC to: "*How Red Is The National Council of Churches?*"

Many thousands of these pamphlets were sold to organizations all across the country and decades afterward, critics of the National Council frequently would cite this pamphlet as their source of information.

The preface of "*How Red...*" describes its content as "*These are just a few of the hundreds of present and past officers, leaders and prominent members of the Federal/National Council who have aided and abetted God-hating, un-American organizations.*"

One of the prominent religious leaders listed by ACCL was Ralph W. Sockman. In 1952 Kaub wrote to J. Edgar Hoover to inquire whether or not Hoover had praised Sockman during a radio interview. One Bureau memo on the matter states that:

“On 3-11-52, the Director advised Kaub that Ralph Sockman had spoken before the FBI National Academy and he would not have invited him to make such an address unless he thought Sockman to be a loyal citizen.”[HQ 62-100432-17, 9/11/53].

A 1953 FBI memo refers to the...

“running feud between the ACCL headed by Kaub and the Federal Council of Churches. The Bureau has received numerous inquiries from individuals who have read ‘*How Red Is the Federal Council of Churches?*’ which brochure was issued by the ACCL. This brochure concerns itself solely with attacking the Federal Council of Churches...In this regard, the Bureau has not investigated the Federal Council of Churches and contact with informants and sources in New York fail to reveal that this council is in any way subversive.” [HQ 62-100432-1, 9/11/53].

In an October 19, 1958 letter to Patrick F. Scanlan, Managing Editor of *The Brooklyn Tablet*, Kaub gives his evaluation of J. Edgar Hoover’s 1958 book, *Masters of Deceit*. According to Kaub, Hoover’s book...

“exemplifies one of the best subversive tricks, namely present a great mass of anti-subversive material to convince the reader that the book is 100% American but insert one section or chapter of poison. In this case, the poison, or deceit, is the complete whitewashing of the vicious Zionist organizations including American Jewish Committee, B’nai B’rith and its subsidiary smear bund, Anti-Defamation League. You, of course, know that these organizations support all sorts of Communist devised subversion by way of developing and leading to their own master-plot for world domination and destruction of Christian civilization.”

In 1959 Kaub contacted both Billy James Hargis and Robert Welch to propose that the ACCL be “*taken over*” and operated by one of them.

IMPACT OF SULLIVAN’S 1961-1962 SPEECHES AROUND THE COUNTRY

To give the reader a sense of the tremendous impact of the Sullivan speeches, below is an excerpt from one letter sent to J. Edgar Hoover. This Birch Society member asserted that Sullivan made it seem that...

“anyone who alleged that many communists have infiltrated the clergy, was uninformed and very much an alarmist. You and I, I hope, know this is not true...All America owes you a debt we can never repay – but I trust that you will not hesitate to support the patriots who are dedicated and conscientiously trying to roll back the Socialistic Communistic tide which threatens to engulf this nation. Regardless of the risk, you must not break faith, but if the anti-communist John Birch Society goes the way that McCarthyism has gone I will always feel that yours was the key testimony which dealt us our most destructive blow.” [HQ 62-104401-1281, 4/30/61].

Hoover replied as follows:

“The communists have tried to infiltrate every part of our society, and I agree with you wholeheartedly that patriotic Americans must continue to take a firm stand against communism...But this opposition to communism must be careful, constructive and positive, and it must always be kept within the due process of law. In reference to Mr. Cassels’ article, Chief Inspector William C. Sullivan in his discussion of communism dealt with this subject with all possible objectivity, candor and accuracy.” [Ibid].

OCTOBER 1961 SULLIVAN SPEECH AT HIGHLAND PARK METHODIST CHURCH

In the Fall of 1961, Chief Inspector Sullivan prepared a comprehensive overview of the subject of Communist infiltration of religion which he proposed to give as a speech at Highland Park Methodist Church in Dallas Texas---reportedly the largest Methodist Church in the world.

By cover memo dated October 5, 1961, Sullivan circulated the proposed text of his speech to top Bureau officials, including J. Edgar Hoover, seeking authorization to give the speech on October 19th. Hoover initialed the memo and wrote "OK".

Here, then, are some major excerpts from Sullivan's remarks plus supplementary material. Notice how carefully Sullivan crafted his comments to specifically address assertions in extreme right literature and speeches. (The numbers in parentheses refer to footnotes in the printed version of the speech).

"Protestants in particular have been singled out by critics, mainly within their own ranks, as being especially susceptible to communist appeals and tactics. It has been charged that the most sizable single body giving support to the American communist movement is comprised of Protestant clergymen (3). Additionally, it has been said that, of all the Protestant denominations, Methodists have been the most extensively infiltrated by communists. (4)"

Footnote #3 refers to a July 1953 article by J.B. Matthews in *American Mercury* magazine which was the basis for Robert Welch's subsequent numerical claim of "more than 7000 Protestant clergymen"

However, Robert Welch misrepresented what Matthews said.

According to Matthews, the 7000 figure he used in the year 1953 reflected the total number of clergymen "during the last 17 years" whom he believed were involved as fellow-travelers, unwitting dupes, party-line adherents, and outright Party members and espionage agents.

Matthews did not attempt to establish how many individuals belonged in each of the 5 categories that he specified nor did he estimate the number of clergymen from his aggregate 7000 total that remained active in 1953 when he wrote his article.

As will shortly become apparent, the 17-year time frame suggested by Matthews refers to the apogee of Communist activity within the U.S. – and, consequently, had no significance for events or circumstances in later decades.

The Bureau's analysis of the Matthews article concluded:

"In arrangement, handling of names, selection of facts, and in its implications, the article is not at all fair to the Protestant clergy of this country" and it characterized Matthew's charges as "more in the nature of sensational journalism than serious reporting of the facts." [HQ 100-5821-22, 7/29/53]

By way of illustrating the imprecision of this "*numbers game*", ex-Communist (and FBI informant) Joseph Zack Kornfeder testified before the House Committee on Un-American Activities in July 1953, that "*up to 600*" Communists had infiltrated the clergy in America. [Tax Fax #31, "*Communist Infiltration In Religion*", published by Kent Courtney, Free Men Speak Inc., and via his newspaper, *The Independent American*, 1961]

Kent Courtney was a JBS member. The Bureau evaluation of Courtney and his publication is contained in the Bureau file captioned "*Communism and Religion*":

"The pamphlet, '*Communist Infiltration in Religion*' is a publication disseminated by '*The Independent American*', New Orleans, Louisiana, whose publisher Kent Courtney, has in the past advocated the impeachment of Chief Justice Earl Warren. His paper indicates he is a rabble rouser and a hate monger, and we have refused to furnish publications disseminated by this Bureau to him." [HQ 100-403529, #237, notation on 8/11/61 file copy of J. Edgar Hoover reply to inquiry from Leonia, New Jersey]

It is revealing that, in 1960, Welch said the number had increased to “*more than 7000*”. Apparently, in the Welch scheme of things, no clergymen in 24 years had died, retired, or were otherwise no longer interested or able to assist the “*communists*”! Moreover, Welch made no distinctions, as even J.B. Matthews had done, between unwitting dupes vs. the other categories mentioned by Matthews.

The next 17 pages of Sullivan’s speech discuss specific details about communist attempts to infiltrate religion. He made a distinction that seems lost on the adherents of the extreme right:

Over the years, some well-meaning, intelligent, and patriotic Americans of distinction—including clergymen—have been induced to give their names, their prestige, and often their talents to communist fronts or causes without apparently being aware of their true nature or purpose. These men and women were mostly motivated by a genuine and idealistic desire to further what they thought or had been led to believe were worthwhile and laudable social objectives and programs. These individuals were frequently too busy or too unsuspecting, or both, to investigate the nature and backing of the organization with which they had identified themselves. Even though in some cases they have known or suspected that communists were involved, they were too unfamiliar with communist practices to realize that communists were not interested in the cause itself, but only in the way it could be twisted and used to advance communist aims and goals.” [William C. Sullivan, *Communism and Religion in The United States*, Highland Park Methodist Church, Dallas, Texas, October 19, 1961, page 3.]

In a section of his speech entitled “*Extent of Communist Infiltration of Clergy*” Sullivan comes to grips with the core allegations made by the extreme right:

“We have seen why and how communists have made continuous and persistent efforts over the years to penetrate American churches and to exploit American clergymen. But to stop here would result in conveying a totally erroneous impression as to the extent of communist infiltration of the clergy. To give an objective appraisal, it is essential to point out that the apogee of communist activity, penetration, and influence among clergymen and churches in the United States coincides with the zenith of the numerical strength, activity, and influence of the American communist movement generally. This peak was reached in the late 1930’s and during and just after World War II. It was in 1944 that the Communist Party USA boasted of a top membership of 80,000 plus an extensive communist front apparatus.”

“Since the late 1940’s, communist influence within the churches and among the clergy has waned along with the diminution of the Party’s membership, activity, and influence on the American scene. Therefore, it cannot be said that the Communist Party USA has achieved any substantial success in exerting domination, control, or influence over America’s clergymen or religious bodies and institutions on a national scale. The fact of the matter is that no substantial number of clergymen have been closely identified with the Communist Party over the years.”

“According to estimates, there are 300,000 ordained clergymen in the United States, the great majority of whom are Protestant. When this large figure is compared with the total number of clergymen who have had communist affiliations, joined communist fronts, engaged in communist activities, supported communist causes, signed communist documents, or otherwise---wittingly or unwittingly---aided and abetted the communist movement during the past four decades, the proportion is actually exceedingly small. Moreover, many of the most active, most vocal, and most publicized of these clergymen who have worked so diligently on behalf of communism do not have or never have had their own churches or congregations. Of those who did have, many were removed when their procommunist backgrounds and connections became known.”

“To recapitulate, it can be stated factually and without equivocation that any allegation is false which holds that there has been and is, on a national scale, an extensive or substantial communist infiltration of the American clergy, in particular the Protestant clergy. This statement applied with equal force to the Methodists as it does to other religious denominations.” [Ibid, pages 18-19].

In January 1961, William Sullivan wrote a review of a recent book entitled *Communism and the Churches* by Ralph Lord Roy. In his review, Sullivan inserted a comment which reveals the FBI's evaluation of the extent of Communist penetration of our clergy and religious institution:

[“Note: In a study prepared by the Bureau in March 1960, 15 clergymen and 18 church workers were listed on the Security Index.”](#) [HQ 100-3-82-320, 1/9/61; also see 100-403539-112].

Since the FBI's "Security Index" was designed to keep track of those persons it considered dangerous to U.S. security, the total of 33 people listed (not 7000+) should put this matter into proper perspective.

A February 24, 1960 memo discusses the SI listings further:

[“A complete review of our SI shows that 13 minister's names are included in our SI. Six of these men are active in church work while seven are retired or inactive. In addition, the names of 21 church workers are included in our SI. These 21 people are, for the most part, engaged in clerical work for various church groups. None of these individuals appear to wield any substantial influence on the national policies of the church groups of which they are affiliated.”](#) [HQ 100-3-106-306, 2/24/60, Mr. Parsons to Alan Belmont, page 3].

The FBI was not the only agency to receive numerous heated inquiries about the Sullivan speeches. Francis E. Walter, Chairman of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, replied to critics of Sullivan—including Edgar C. Bundy of Church League of America.

In his 3/21/61 letter to Bundy, HCUA Chairman Walter observed that Sullivan was [“probably the most knowledgeable of any agent in the Bureau on the subject of Communism”](#), and in a subsequent August 7, 1961 letter to another Sullivan critic, Walter wrote: [“I do not find that our Committee is in disagreement in any way with the statements contained in Sullivan's speech.”](#) [FBI HQ file 94-4-4644, serial #66].

With respect to extreme right assertions regarding the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA (NCCC), one must understand something about FBI requirements for commencing an official investigation. Here, then, is the FBI explanation:

[“Under our policy we initiate investigation regarding communist infiltration of any church group if the communists have infiltrated the group in sufficient numbers to substantially influence or control the affairs of the group. However, such an investigation may be started by the field only with prior Bureau authority. We have only one such investigation. It involves the First Unitarian Church in Los Angeles, California.”](#) [HQ 100-3-106-306, 2/24/60, Mr. Parsons to Alan Belmont, page 2].

With that policy in mind, the Bureau never conducted an official investigation of the NCCC. Quoted below is the FBI characterization of NCCC:

[“The Bureau has never conducted an investigation of the NCCC; however, we have in the past checked with informants and did not develop any indication that communists influence the policies of this organization.”](#) [100-3-106-306, 2/24/60, Mr. Parsons to Alan Belmont, page 6-7]

However, the Bureau did discover Communist-front affiliations of some NCCC officials:

[“With respect to the NCCC, it seems obvious from the information in our files that the Communist Party USA is not controlling the policies of this body. However, we do have information that \(names deleted\) of this group, and four of its national officers have been affiliated with communist-front organizations. We have not conducted investigation on any of these individuals and they have not been converted to membership in the Communist Party USA. Neither has the Communist Party USA been able to place](#)

a communist on the staff of the NCCC.” [HQ 100-3-106-306, 2/24/60, Mr. Parsons to Alan Belmont, page 16]

Communist Party Use of Clergymen

What, primarily, was the Communist Party USA able to accomplish with respect to infiltrating and influencing our clergy?

According to the FBI...

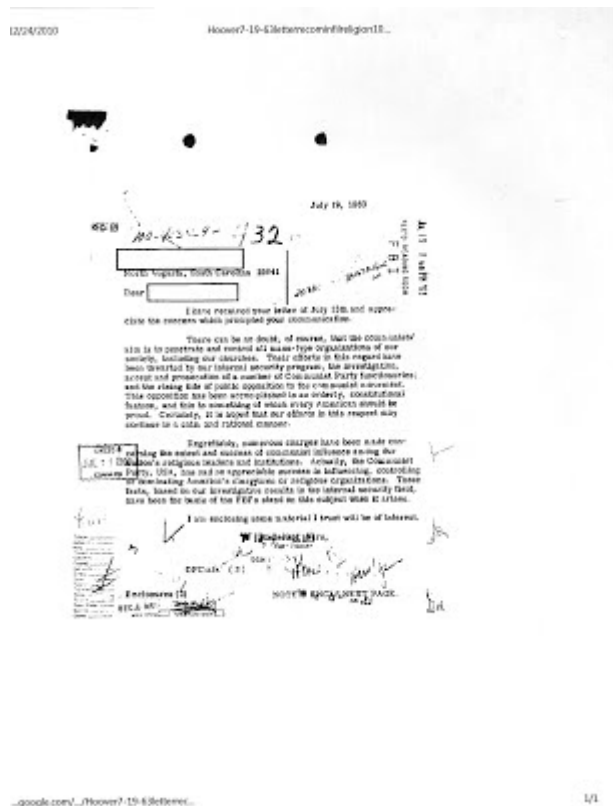
“One of the most successful approaches used by communists in the religious field is its ability to obtain the names of clergymen and prominent church people on various types of petitions aimed at furthering some communist program. The Party carries out this program very subtly and most of the clergymen who sign such petitions are not aware that they are affixing their name to a communist-sponsored paper.” [HQ 100-3-106-306, 2/24/60, Mr. Parsons to Alan Belmont, page 9]

“...The Party’s greatest success in influencing American clergymen in any way has been its ability to persuade them to sign petitions. This is not so startling considering the fact the petitions are not usually presented as Communist Party petitions. The clergymen are approached on the basis they will be lending their names to a worthy cause such as peace, civil rights or amnesty for some individual serving an alleged unjust jail sentence. While this does not mean that the Communist Party USA is able to control the policies of the church groups, it does reveal they were able, although it may have been through subterfuge, to influence the thinking of a number of clergymen with respect to the communist propaganda involved in the petitions signed.” [HQ 100-3-106-306, 2/24/60, Mr. Parsons to Alan Belmont, page 16]

In 1963, J. Edgar Hoover made the following observations about this issue:

"There can be no doubt, of course, that the communists' aim is to penetrate and control all mass-type organizations of our society, including our churches. Their efforts in this regard have been thwarted by our internal security program...Regrettably, numerous charges have been made concerning the extent and success of communist influence among our Nation's religious leaders and institutions. Actually, the Communist Party USA has had no appreciable success in influencing, controlling, or dominating America's clergymen or religious organizations. These facts, based on our investigative results in the internal security field, have been the basis of the FBI's stand on this subject when it arises." [HQ 100-403529-432, July 19, 1963 Hoover letter in response to an inquiry on the subject]

See actual memo here: [Hoover7-19-63letterrecominfilreligion100-403529-432.jpg](#)



Chapter 4:

FBI vs. JBS on Communists in the Department of Health, Education, Welfare

An example of the problem that Hoover described regarding "self-styled experts...without valid credentials" is contained in Bureau memoranda of February 1961 which pertain to a speech and article by JBS National Council member Revilo P. Oliver. Oliver's statements concerned alleged Communist infiltration into the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

ARTICLE:

In his October 1959 *American Opinion* article Oliver asserted that:

- (1) between 70% and 80% of the responsible officers in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (DHEW) were "members or accomplices" of the Communist conspiracy,
- (2) some DHEW employees served as Communist couriers, and
- (3) DHEW officials intended to purge employees with anti-Communist tendencies.

SPEECH:

In his March 1959 speech to Illinois DAR, Oliver stated that "fully one-third of the top echelon of Communist conspirators in this country" could be found in DHEW and he cited former FBI Security Informant, Herbert A. Philbrick (of "I Led 3 Lives" fame) as his source of information.

[HQ 62-104401-709, enclosure = "All America Must Know How Reds Work In Government", Oliver speech before annual Illinois State Convention of the Daughters of the American Revolution.]

ROBERT WELCH USE OF OLIVER INFO:

At the first meeting of the JBS National Council which was held January 9, 1960 in Chicago at the Union League Club, Robert Welch told National Council members:

"It is estimated from many reliable sources that from 70% to 90% of the responsible personnel in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare are Communists."

It seems clear that Welch did NOT rely upon "many reliable sources" but, relied instead, just upon Revilo Oliver. In the March 1965 issue of *American Opinion*, Robert Welch described Oliver as "an authentic genius of the first water, and quite possibly the world's greatest living scholar."

But notice that Welch garbled what Oliver said.

According to Welch, the percentage increased to a possible 90% and he characterized all the suspect personnel as "Communists" whereas Oliver was more ambiguous and used the descriptive phrase "members or accomplices of the communist conspiracy" amounting to perhaps as much as 80% of responsible DHEW personnel.

Nowhere are any of these terms defined. They are sufficiently imprecise and vague to permit any interpretation and thus are insusceptible of either proof or refutation---a common semantic problem in conspiracy argumentation.

The FBI received numerous inquiries about this matter and HQ instructed its Boston Field Office to contact Herbert Philbrick to discover what he allegedly told Revilo Oliver.

Here is the FBI memo summary on the matter:

"Herbert Philbrick, a former informant of the Boston Office, has been contacted regarding Oliver's statements and has advised he has never given Oliver any information concerning communist infiltration of the DHEW, that he knows no one in this Department, and has had no information concerning Communist activity in the United States Government since at least 1944. Philbrick considers Oliver to be an extremist in anticommunist feelings and violently anti-Semitic. The Boston Office has advised there is no record of any statement regarding the DHEW in its files emanating from Philbrick. Through a review of the Bureau Security Index cards, it was determined that no employees of the DHEW are included in the Security Index." [HQ 62-104401-unrecorded, February 1, 1961, F.J. Baumgardner to Alan H. Belmont]

The reference to "no employees of the DHEW are included in the Security Index" is particularly noteworthy since the SI was designed to be the FBI's method of identifying persons it considered actually or potentially dangerous to U.S. security and that included (a) members of the Communist Party, (b) individuals with Communist sympathies, (c) persons who were leaders within Communist front groups, (d) or persons with "anarchist or revolutionary beliefs".

In short: Nobody that the FBI considered subversive or dangerous to U.S. security was employed within the DHEW!

At the conclusion of the Bureau memo concerning Oliver's DHEW charges, FBI Associate Director Clyde Tolson handwrote:

"I think we should take a closer look at the John Birch Society. If it publishes such a publication it is suspect."

It is precisely the wild statements made by Welch and Oliver about DHEW that exemplified why the Bureau became suspicious of anyone connected to the Birch Society and why Hoover frequently made statements about the dangers inherent in "self-styled experts on communism, without valid credentials" engaging in "rumor-mongering and hurling false and wholly unsubstantiated allegations..."

To continue to Chapter 5 which pertains to Dr. Harry Overstreet, click link below.

[CHAPTER 5 -- HARRY A. OVERSTREET](#)